Chapter 19
The Smaller Mosques of Ṣan'ā'

Smaller Early Mosques

The *Jabbānah* or Muṣallā al-'Idayn (fig.19.1, pls.19.2,3;29) is a large open-air prayer place outside the walls to the north of the city. It was originally built during the lifetime of the Prophet, by one of the Companions, Farwah b. Musayk al-Murādī, acting on his direct instruction, according to al-Rāzī.[1] The site, tradition asserts, was the camp of the Abyssinians.[2] Al-Rāzī says it was called Jabbānah Banī Juraysh, i.e. Juraysh b. Ghazwān. It is said they were the people of Khurāsān and they were rich. The original building consisted of a paved courtyard surrounded by four walls, with a single entrance, through the *qiblah* wall.[3] When the Great Mosque was rebuilt during the reign of al-Walīd, the Umayyad Caliph (86-96/705-15), the Jabbānah was 'renovated' at the same time.[4]

It was then repaired in 280/893-4, and again in 407/1015-16, when it was 'surrounded with plaster and stones'.[5]

The next renovation was in 602/1205-6, a fact recorded in a stone inscription in the *qiblah* wall; at the same time a *waqf* garden was created adjoining it to the west, together with a wall and pool.[6] Another stone inscription tells of the destruction of the Jabbānah in 965/1557-8, after which it remained in a ruinous state for two years, before it was restored in 967/1559-60,[7] by the Amīr Iskandar al-Kurdī. It was repaired again in the period 1098-1130/1686-1718.

The present Jabbānah is twice as big as the Jabbānah referred to above, it having been enlarged by Imām Yaḥyā in the early 14th/20th century by moving the southern wall. It is reported that he built the wall 'of a firm, well-built construction according to the lines of the previous bulding.'[8] This probably does not mean that the whole Jabbānah was rebuilt; crenellations, doorways and other features may be an accurate reflection of the early designs. The *miḥrāb* was rebuilt and redecorated ca. 1387/1968. The doorway in the *qiblah* wall next to the *miḥrāb* remains, but after the period of the earliest building other entrances were built, and there are now two in the eastern wall and three in the southern wall. The *minbar* incorporates a curious throne made of a pre-Islamic capital. There is a pre-Islamic (Sabaean) inscription built into the outside of the *qiblah* wall.

The Mosque of Farwah b. Musayk al-Murādī (pls.19.4-6) was built by one of the Companions of the Prophet while he was building the Jabbānah, 'and he used to sit on it, on the days when the building was going on in the Jabbānah'.[9] Today women go to it, among other mosques, with votive offerings (*nadhr*). If Farwah was indeed buried there, his tomb is no longer identified. But in the tenth century al-Rāzī regarded this as one of the four early mosques in the Yemen,[10] this suggests that the original building was still standing at this time; it was renovated by Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī in 407/1016-7.[11]

There are two parts of the mosque which could date back to this period, if not to the earliest building. These are the columned area next to the ablution pools, apparently an early porch, which incorporates pre-Islamic material, and the two-domed chamber near it to the east. The latter has a stepped wall of black basalt on the inside, which resembles the wall of the Great Mosque. In addition it has rough stalactite-type pendentives under the dome which appear to be early examples of this feature, a *muqarnas* (pl. 19.6) [12]

In 997/1588-9 the mosque was altered again.[13] The large domed prayer hall was built by the Ottoman governor Ḥasan Pasha of the same type as those of the Janāḥ mosque (see below p.375) and apparently the porch was roofed with eight domes at the same time, that is early in the 11th/17th century according to al-Ḥajarī.[14] In 1390/1970 the domed porch was demolished, the walls of the domed chamber were pierced on two sides by wide arched openings, and a modern flat-roofed prayer hall was built on the northern and western sides, through which the minaret now rises. In the course of these alterations most of the seventeenth century *miḥrāb* was destroyed, and a new *miḥrāb* built to the north.

Two domes which cover tomb chambers in the north east

1 Ob. 460/1073. That this is still on its original site is testified by *Masājid Ṣan'ā'*, 39.
2 Mu'askar al-Ḥabashī. *Masājid*, 39. 'It was a field belonging to Abū Ḥāmmāl al-Abnawī which he gifted to God and His Apostles.' It was in the Persian part of Ṣan'ā'.
3 Cf. description of al-Hamdānī, *Iklīl VIII*, Baghdad, 1931, 86.
4 *Masājid*, 39, quoting al-Rāzī.
5 Ibid.
6 See also p. 349a.
7 *Masājid*, 41. It should be noted that the Jabbānah contains only one inscription today, and this is too worn to be read. Cf. 19.2.
8 *Masājid*, 41.
9 Ibid, 39. According to al-Rāzī, 142, Farwah said to the Prophet, *'Innī fi bayt qawmī wa-'adadi-him*, I am the head of the house of my tribe and the greatest number of them.' This is an expression often used in the genealogies of a ruling house in a tribe, perhaps also exercising spiritual authority. If so the implications are interesting.
10 Ibid, 232-3.
11 Ibid, 224.
12 The earliest perfect forms of this architectural element known are on the tomb of Davāzdah Imām at Yazd in Persia, 427/1037.
13 Date given on the inscription at the bottom of the minaret.
14 *Masājid*, 89.

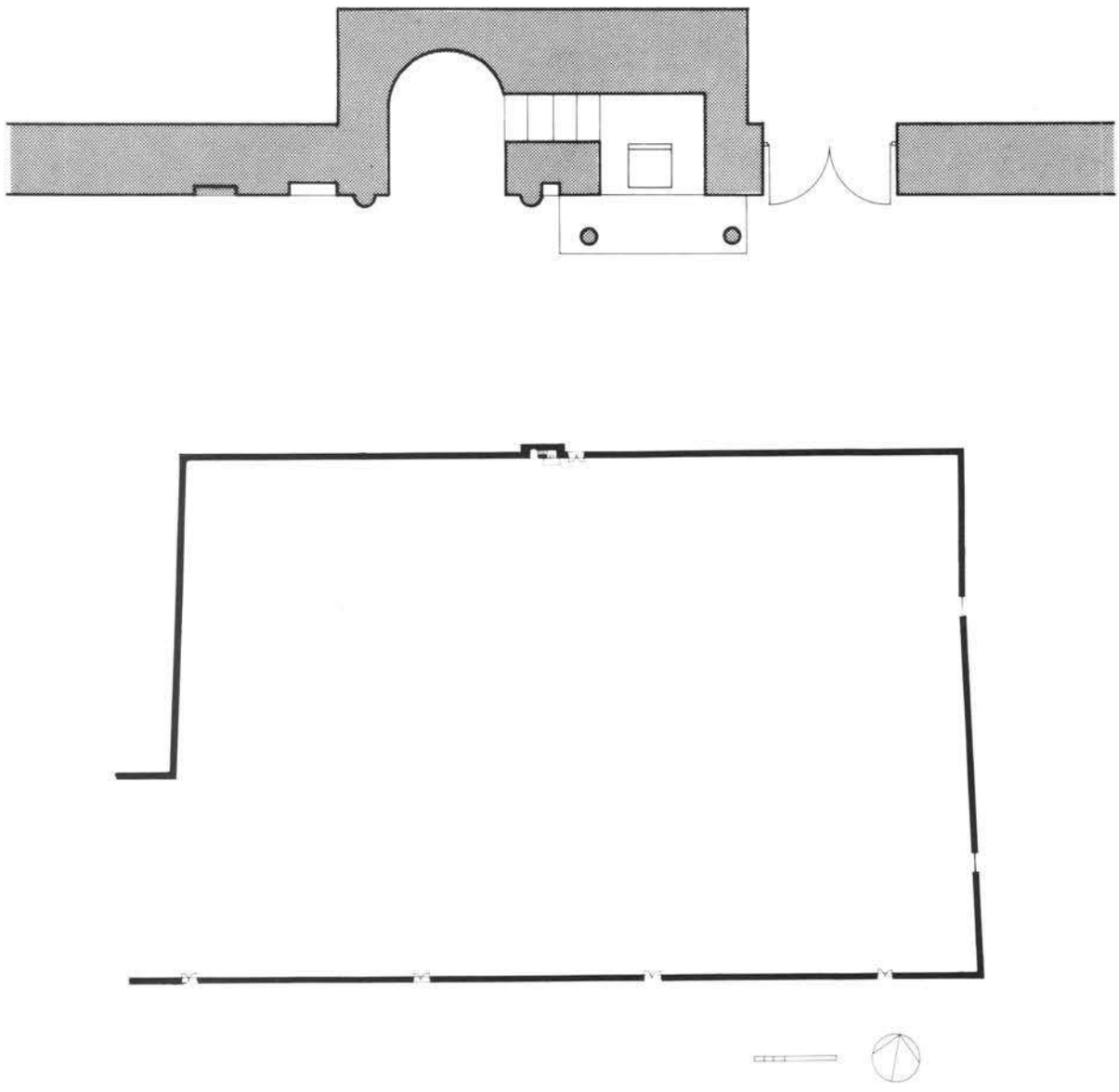


Fig. 19.1 Al-Jabbānah. Plan and detailed plan of the centre of the *qiblah* wall.

corner of the building date from the 11th/17th century, and are those of the son the governor Ḥasan Pasha and Iskandar b. Ḥusām al-Kurdī (ob. 971/1563-4).

Other mosques, for which no early documentary references exist, may yet be grouped into the general category of an early type by comparing them with mosques in other Yemeni towns for which an early date can be established with certainty, such as Shibām-Kawkabān.[15] Mosques of this early type—the *apadāna* type, named after and partly derived from the Persian royal hall—have roofs with beams which rest directly on stone or wooden columns, without the introduction of arches. This was a widely spread type in early Islam, the mosques of Kufah, Wāsiṭ, Baghdād and Samarra conforming to it. Typical of this early style in Ṣan'ā' are the mosques of al-Ṭāwūs and al-Jilā.

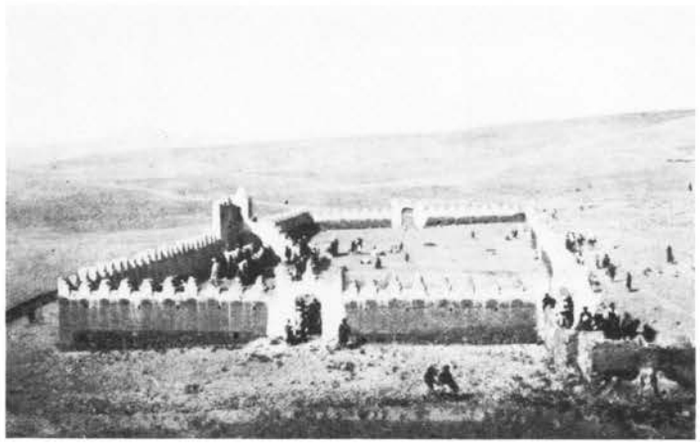
Ṭāwūs mosque (fig. 19.2, pls. 19.8-11) was named after one of the second generation Companions (*tābi'*), Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān al-Yāmānī, who died at Mecca in 106/724-5.[16] His father was of Fārs and married a *mawlā* woman of Āl Hūd—he was probably of the Abnā'. It is therefore possible, from his *nisbah,* that this mosque was founded to house his tomb. A tomb chamber indeed survives at the southern end of the prayer hall covered by two domes, and still containing a plaster tomb, without, however, retaining any identification.

The mosque is built as a columned hall with an entrance court and a porch opening onto the street. The hall is high, with two rows of two tall columns, perhaps built up of pre-Islamic fragments and afterwards plastered, which carry transverse beams supporting the roof. Light enters the room through six small alabaster windows with semi-circular heads, high in the side walls. In addition there are two fanlights made of three circles of gypsum tracery containing coloured glass.

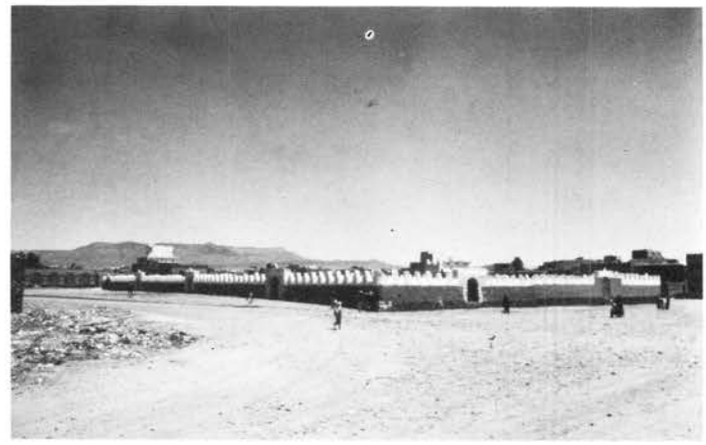
The *qiblah* wall has a strongly articulated treatment, dividing the surface into a central *miḥrāb,* flanked by two cupboard recesses. The *miḥrāb,* with a heavily-moulded, scalloped niche fronted by a low pointed arch carried on two colonnettes with high capitals, is framed in a larger arch carried on larger columns with the same capitals; that in turn is set within the

15 The Shibām mosque almost certainly dates from the mid-third/mid-ninth century with, possibly, later embellishments, such as the ceiling, in the early 4th/10th century; see Lewcock, Ronald, and Smith, G. R., 'Two Early Mosques in the Yemen', *AARP,* London, 1973, IV, 117-130.

16 al-Rāzī, 319.

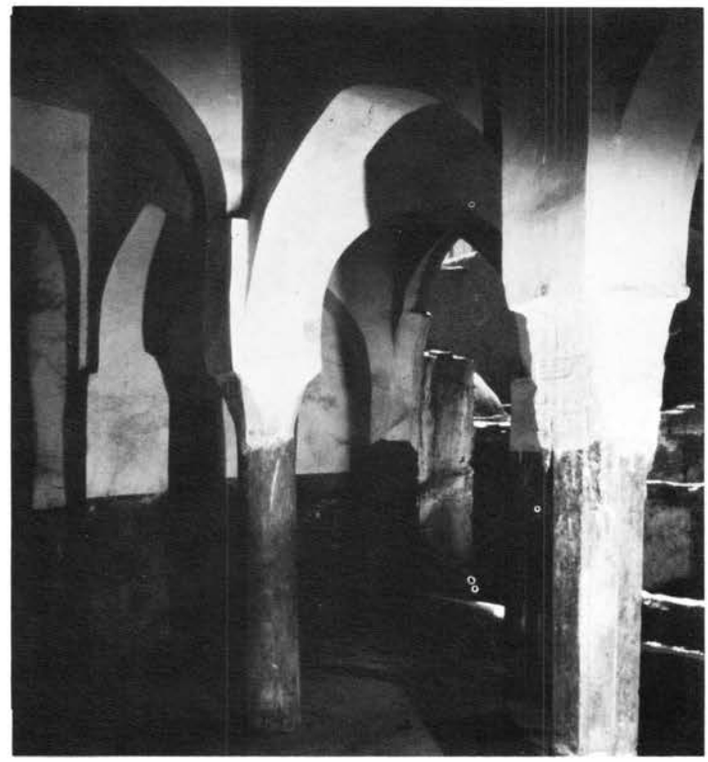


19.1 Al-Jabbānah as it was, in a photograph taken fifty years ago. (Mittwoch)



19.3 Al-Jabbānah. Showing its greatly enlarged form after the alterations made under Imām Yaḥyā.

19.2 Al-Jabbānah. The inscription to the west of the *miḥrāb*.



19.4 Mosque of Farwah b. Musayk. The porch leading to the ablution area, containing pre-Islamic column shafts.

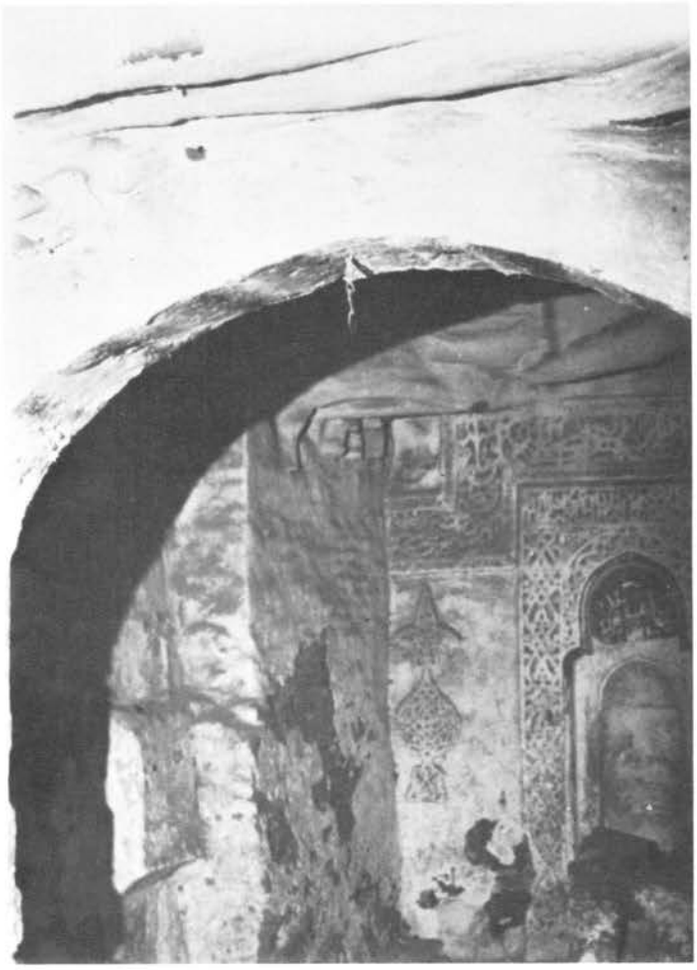
rectangular band which projects beyond the face of the wall. There are two brackets for lamps on either side of the *miḥrāb*. Above these, and above the cupboard recesses, strips of what were once calligraphic ornament run across the flanking wall spaces, surmounted by pointed arches of the same calligraphic bands, containing inner scalloped arches with ornamental beaker patterns inside them.

The whole of this decoration, which is very fine in proportion and general design, is so obscured by centuries of whitewashing that it is difficult to discern the detail. It seems likely to be work of the 9th or 10th/15th or 16th century. It is possible, however, that this plaster ornament is redecoration retaining the general form of an earlier scheme.

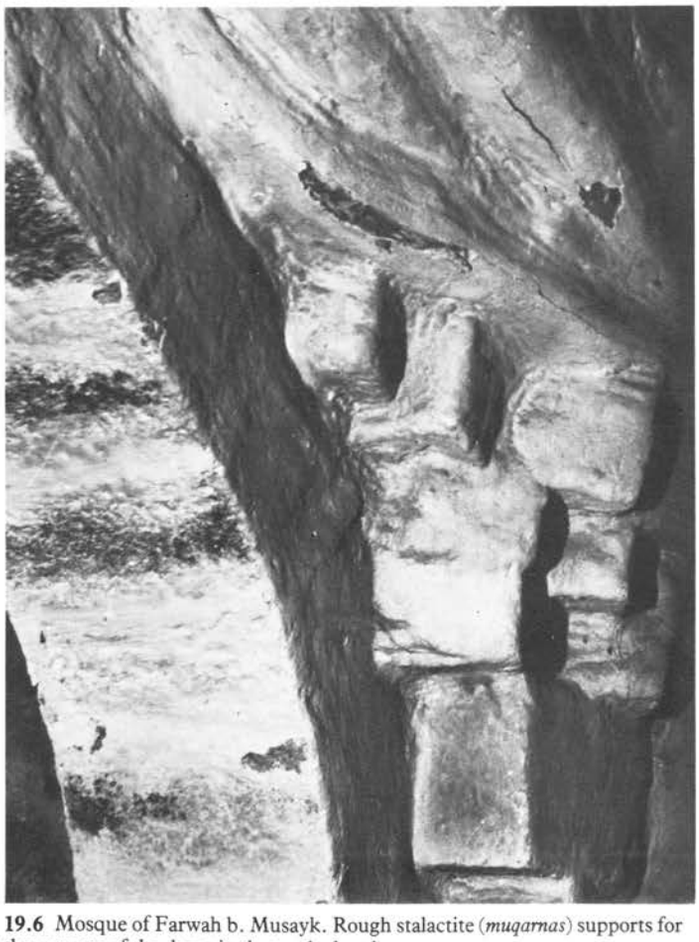
The tomb chamber is composed of two rooms, an outer room covered by a dome supported on a combination of squinch arches and stepped pendentives, and an inner tomb-room of truncated triangular shape with a lesser dome. The tomb is of plaster, aligned along the north wall. Originally the two rooms were separated only by a wide archway. There are three high windows of alabaster and one low metal grille opening into the street outside.

Al-Ǧilā'/al-Ǧalā' mosque (fig.19.3, pls.19.12-14) was originally a synagogue. There is no record in Arabic sources available to us of the date of its original construction, but just as Jewish houses in the old city of Ṣan'ā' closely resemble Muslim houses, synagogues were similar to mosques. Whatever distinguishing features this synagogue once had were completely removed when it was converted, and the structural shell remains which belongs to the early *apadāna* type. The Arabic sources maintain that this mosque was built 'in the place of the synagogue of the Jews', but architectural evidence points rather to alteration and adaptation than a completely new building.

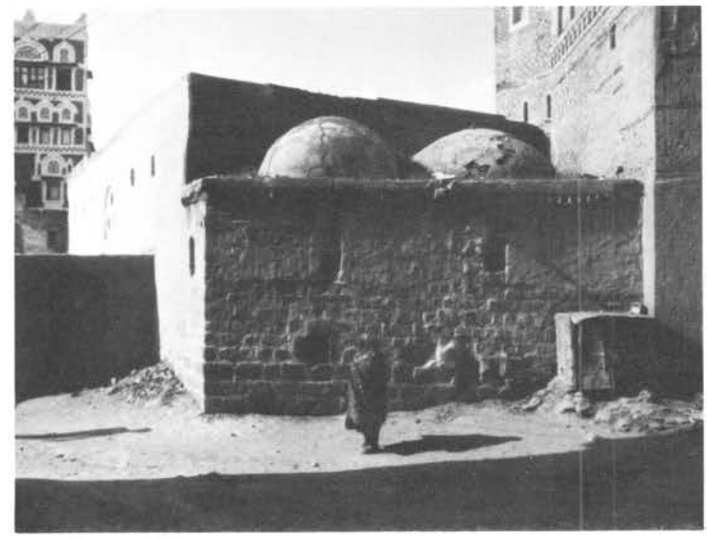
Al-Jilā' mosque has three rows of four columns carrying transverse beams across the prayer hall. All the columns are built up of pre-Islamic fragments which in most cases have been simply plastered and whitewashed. Only the two columns flanking the *miḥrāb* have a plaster palmette capital overlaying the original stone forms. There are small plaster bracketed shelves for lamps on some of the columns. At the eastern end of the *qiblah* wall there is a blocked-up doorway which once led in from the street; presumably this was a door of the synagogue, which was closed when it became a mosque in order to ensure passage through the



19.5 Mosque of Farwah b. Musayk. Interior of the tomb chamber.



19.6 Mosque of Farwah b. Musayk. Rough stalactite (*muqarnas*) supports for the corners of the dome in the tomb chamber.



19.7 Mosque of al-Ṭāwūs. Exterior, with the tomb in the foreground.

19.8 Mosque of al-Ṭāwūs. Interior before repair.

ablution area. This doorway has a low curved head; a plaster shelf for a lamp has since been built across part of it. During its life as a synagogue this building would have had one section of the floor higher than the rest, to act as a women's area.[17] The columns which seem least likely to have been truncated by a later general raising of the floor to make it level throughout are those at the eastern end, and this indeed appears to be an area of the building which was added subsequently as it is distinct in construction (see pls. 19.12 and 19.13); it was apparently partitioned

17 Joseph Qāfih *Jewish Life in Ṣan'ā'* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1969, 78, see p. 400a.

19.9 Mosque of al-Ṭāwūs. Another view of the interior, showing the decoration of the *qiblah* wall.

19.10 Mosque of al-Ṭāwūs. The interior of the tomb at the narrow end, the floor covered with fragments of old manuscripts. The tomb platform on the right.

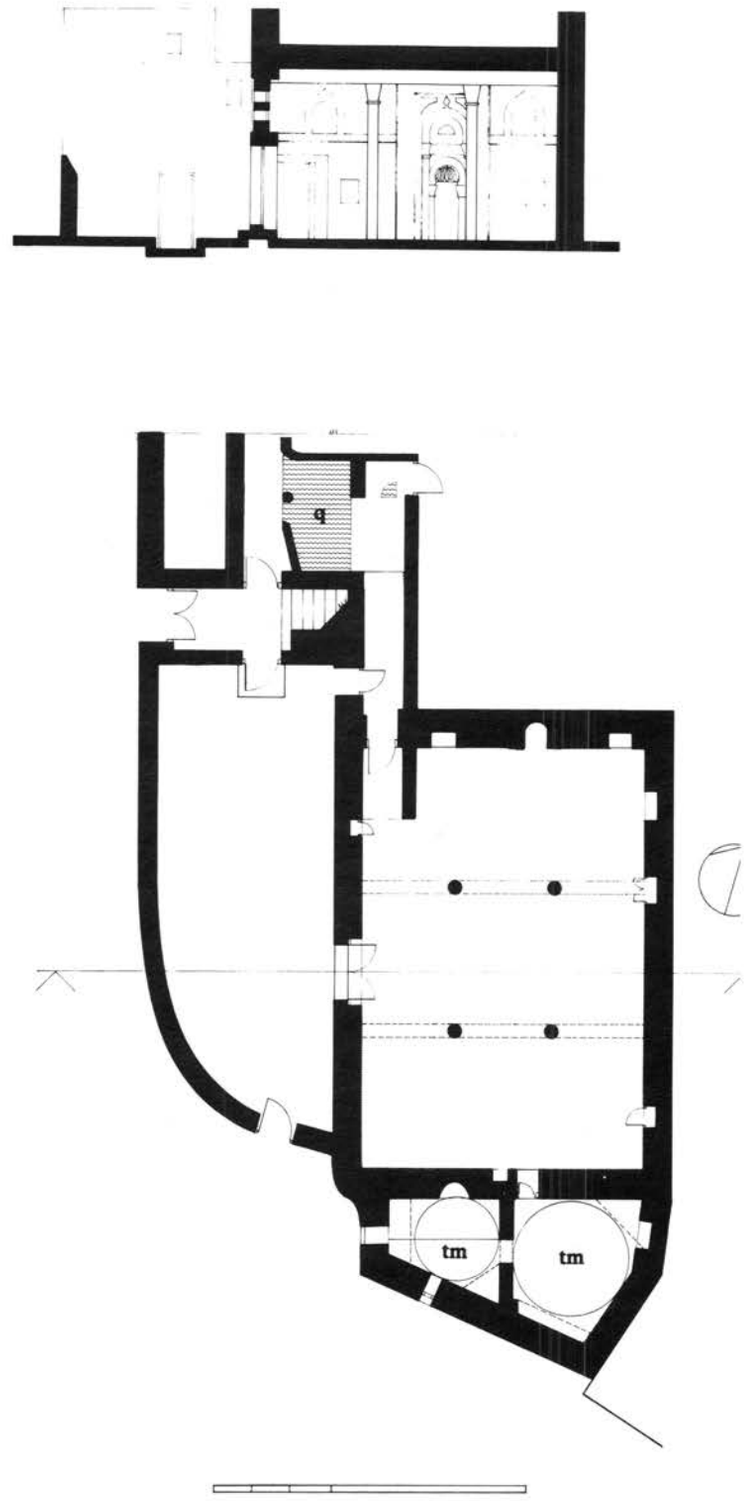


Fig. 19.2 Mosque of al-Ṭāwūs. Plan and cross-section.

Key to all figures

a animal stalls
b bathroom
br boiler
c court
cu court upper level
ch changing room
d *dīwān*
e entrance hall
eu entrance hall upper level
f warm room
fr furnace room
g grinding mills
gh *ghayl*—water level
h excrement room
hr hot room
j grain and fruit store
k kitchen
l lobby
lt laundry terrace
lb lavatory/bathroom
m *mafraj*
mn minaret
n *miḥrāb*
nw washing floor
o loading and mounting animals
or restaurant/eating place
p passage
pl pool
plr cold pool room
q public ablution area
r room—general use and sleeping
rr reception room and business
rl library
s store
sh sheep pens
sp shop
t terrace
tm tomb
tr treasury
u shaft
v rain water cistern
vm man in charge
w well
wb water cooling box
wr well ramp
x *minbar*
y women's room and wardrobe
z *manẓar*

19.11 Mosque of al-Jalā. Exterior from the court.

off from the rest of the hall, the partition being where the second row of columns now stands.

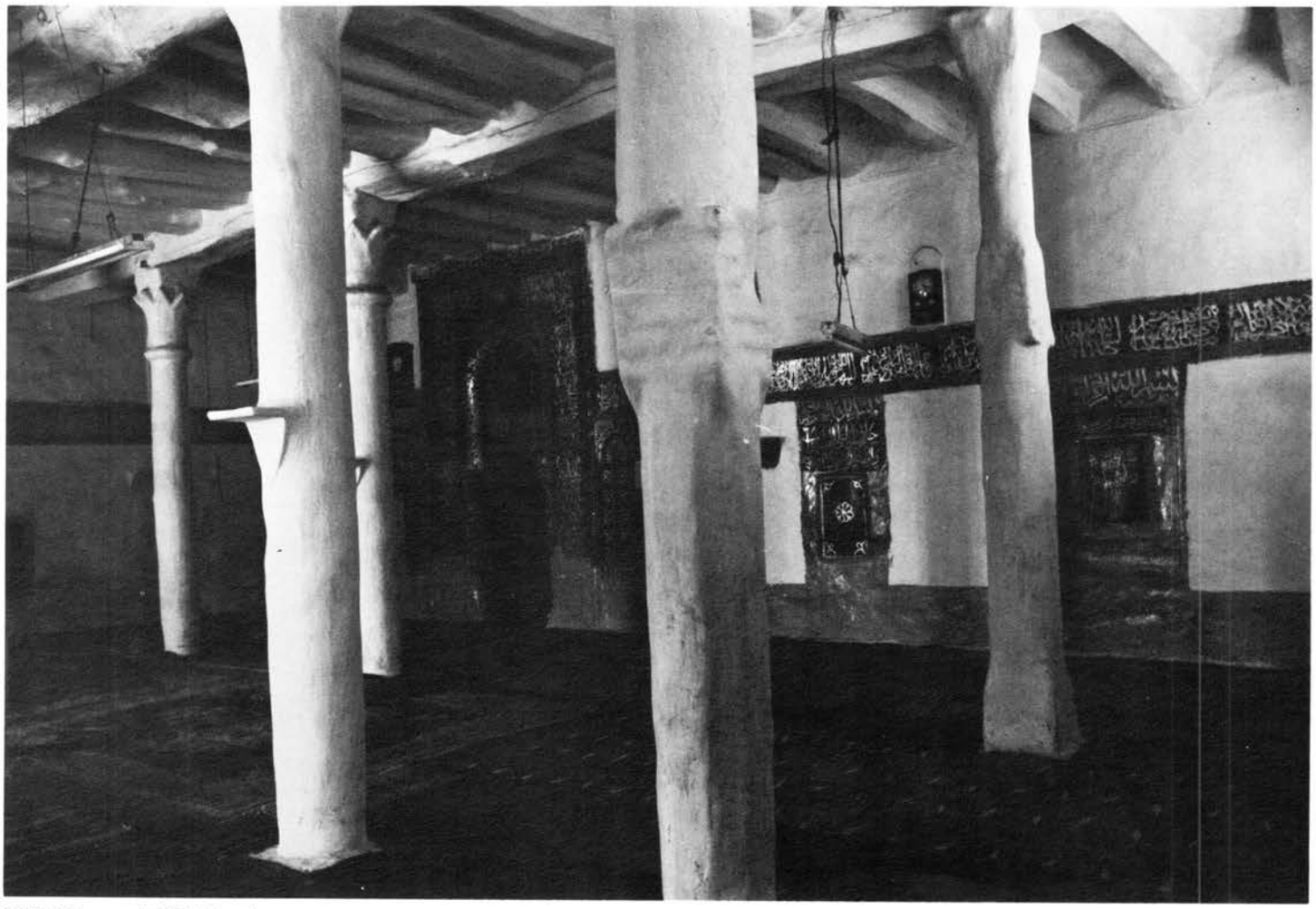
In synagogues there was a raised 'ark' for storing holy scrolls along the northern wall. In the remainder of the walls there were small cupboards for books. There was a court in front of the synagogue with a basin for washing the hands, and lavatories were on the far side of the court away from the prayer hall.

In al-Jilā' all of these features were easily converted for the use of the Muslim community after the decision had been taken to remove the Jews from the old city and prohibit them from returning there.

In 1091/1680-1, the Imām al-Mahdī Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan turned the synagogue into a mosque, an event recorded in verse inscribed on the inside wall of the mosque.[18]

The plaster decoration of the *qiblah* wall contains panels of very fine patterning, and a fluid calligraphy. The *miḥrāb* is a typical example of the work of the late 11th/17th century.

Another early mosque of the *apadāna* type is the mosque of Ma'ād. This has a pre-Islamic inscription incorporated in the outside of the east wall, the construction of which resembles that of the Great Mosque. Internally, the front pair of columns consists of pre-Islamic column drums, sixteen-sided below and eight-sided above. The back pair of columns is a modern replacement. One of the front columns stands directly in front of the *miḥrāb*, as happens also at Shibām.[19]



19.12 Mosque of al-Jalā. Interior.

18 p.400a.

19 Lewcock and Smith, op. cit. al-Ḥajari, *Masājid*, 114, says of this mosque that it was one of the buildings erected by the ancestor of the Ma'ād family, who are found today in the district of Hamdān. Its ablution places were built in the 10th/16th century by the Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā.

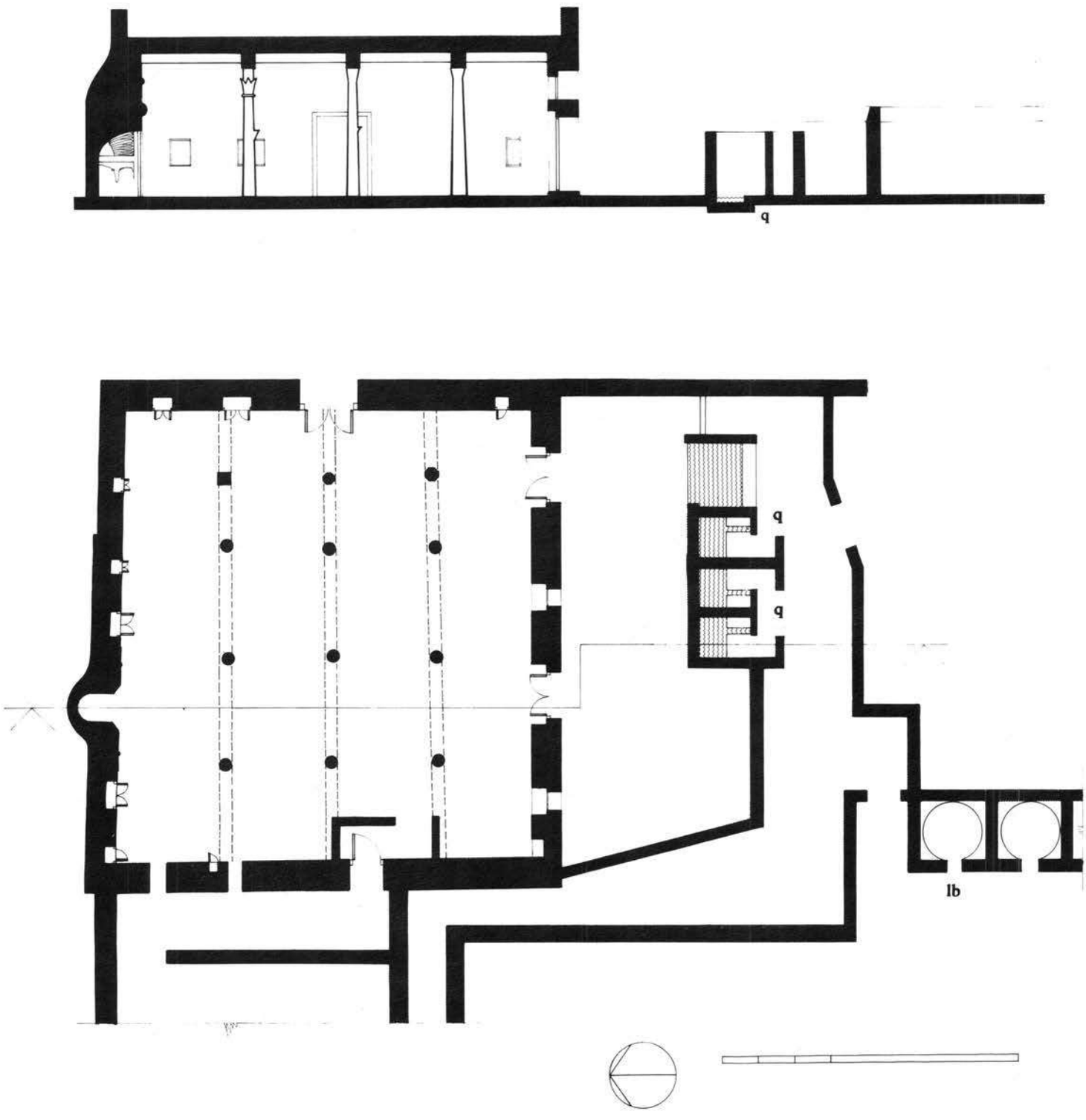
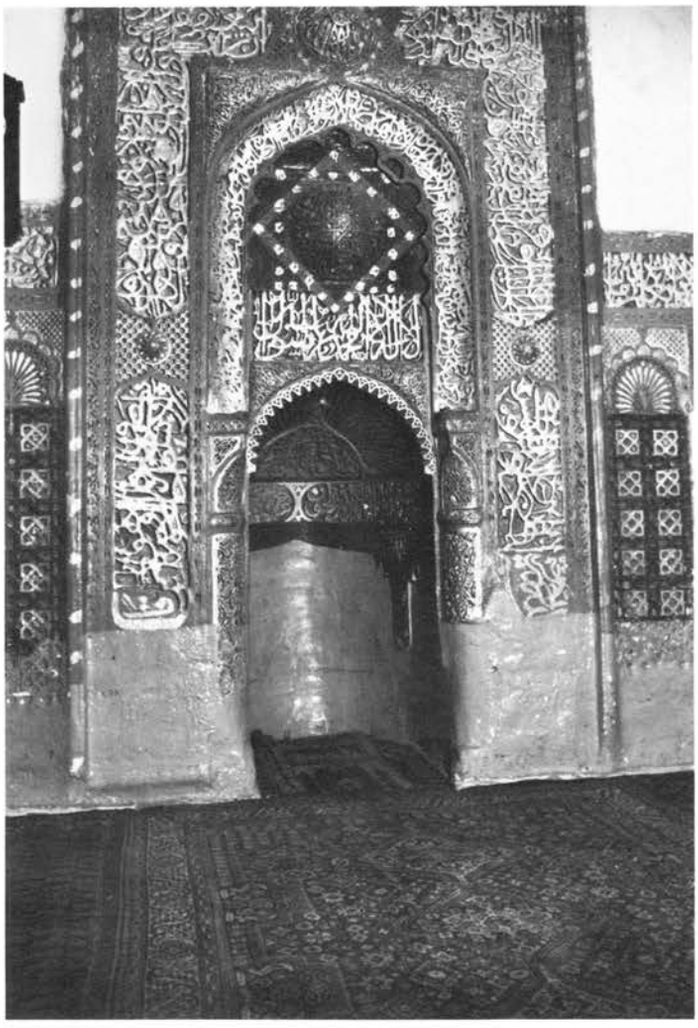
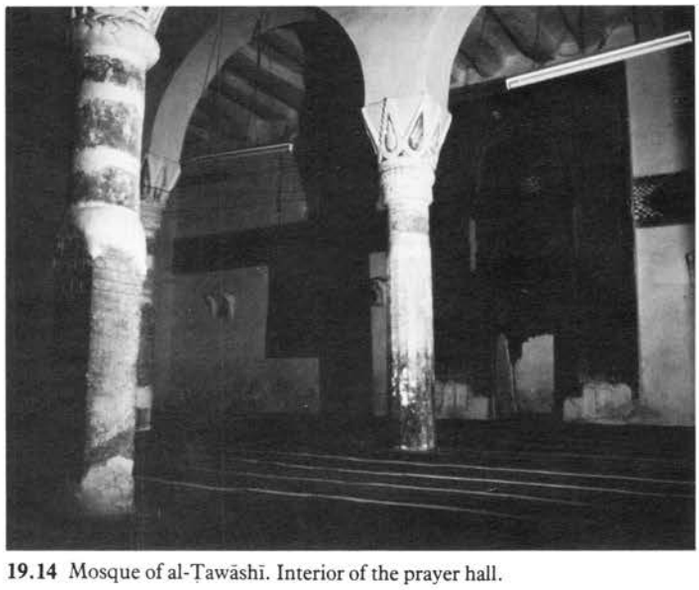


Fig. 19.3 Mosque of al-Jalā. Plan and section.

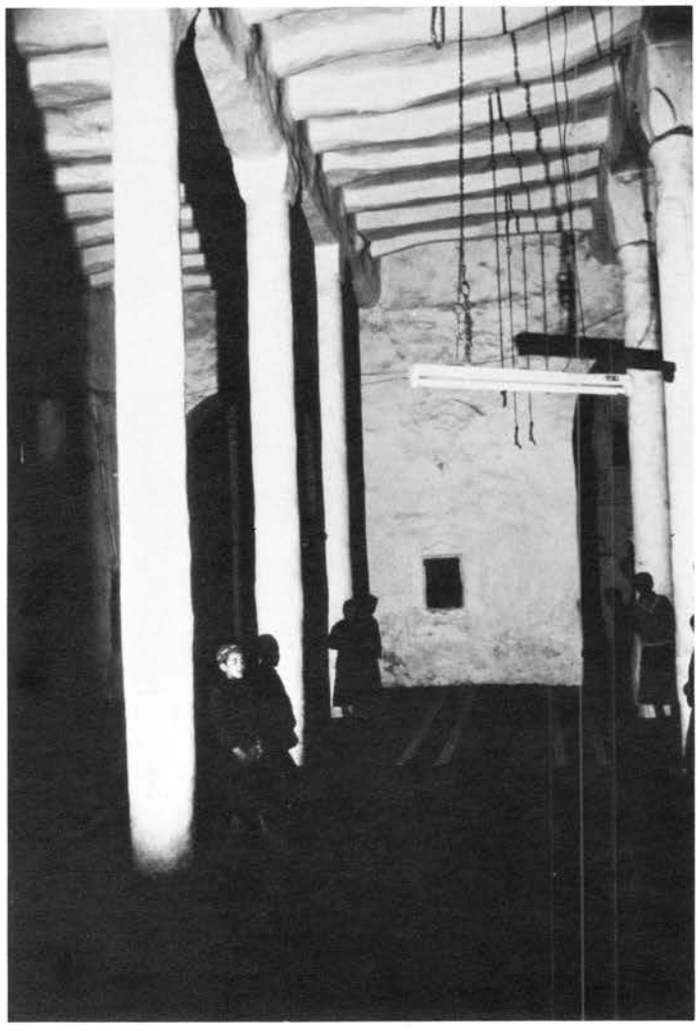


19.13 Mosque of al-Jalā. *Miḥrāb* and flanking cupboards.



19.14 Mosque of al-Ṭawāshī. Interior of the prayer hall.

Jāmi' al-Ṭawāshī is also of the *apadāna* type, with high plastered columns originally grouped in two rows of three carrying transverse beams (pl.19.15). It is recorded that the mosque was built by an ambassador of the Sultan of India, named al-Ṭawāshī,



19.15 Mosque of al-Shahīdayn. Interior of the prayer hall.

in 1028/1618-9 during the latter's stay in Ṣan'ā'.[20] An extension at an early date added four columns, with longitudinal beams to the southern side. A still later extension was made with low arcades, in 1103/1691-2.[21] The external wall has been rebuilt in this century. The capitals of the columns are plain, and the *miḥrāb* and decorative inscriptions on the walls are dated 1098/1686-7; they contain work by the same hand as that which executed the *miḥrāb* at al-Jilā' mosque described above. The minaret is an addition made by Shaykh 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad al-Ḍila'ī al-Sirayḥī in 1103/1691-2.[22]

None of the ceilings of this group of *apadāna* mosques is decorated in the elaborate manner of the mosque of Shibām, Ṣarḥah, or the early Great Mosque (pls.22,23,25,26;18.41-47). Instead they are the humblest kind of utility construction, rough beams plastered over and painted with whitewash.

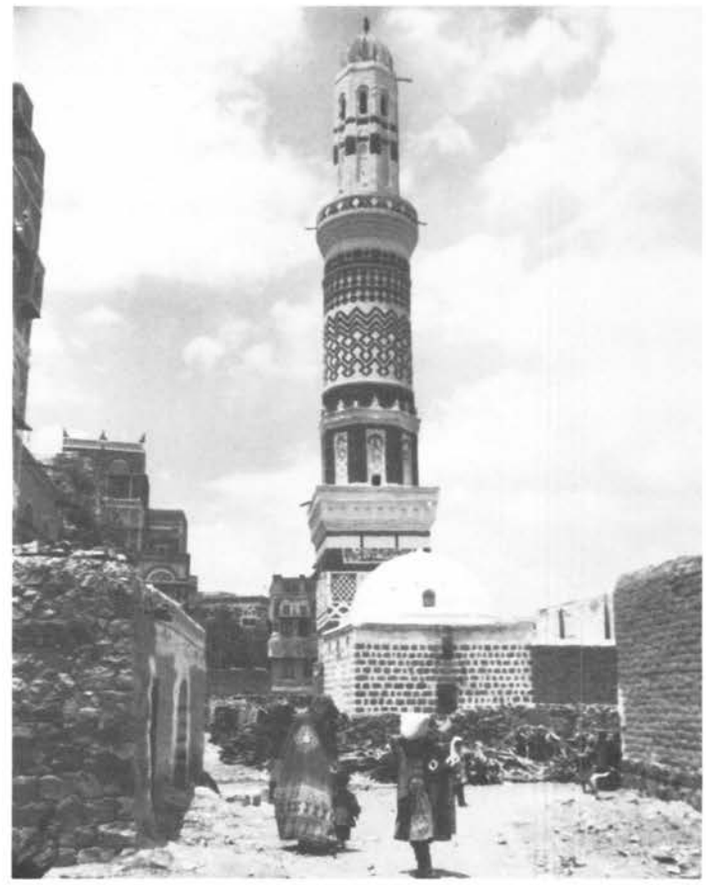
Arcaded Mosques Earlier than the 10th/16th Century

The foundation of the *mosque of al-Shahīdayn* near the market may be dated to an early period by the ancient calligraphy on some of the remaining inscriptions built into its walls.[23] The name ('the Two Martyrs') comes from an incident which is recorded as happening about 40/660-1, when two infant sons of the 'Alī²id governor of the house of Hāshim were murdered by

20 *Ghāyat al-amānī*, Cairo, 1388/1968, 813. *Masājid*, 69.
21 *Masājid*, loc. cit.
22 Cf. illustrations, Lewcock and Smith, op. cit.
23 See pl. 19.16.

19.16 Mosque of al-Shahīdayn. Early inscription in the southern entrance on the outside wall of the tomb chamber.

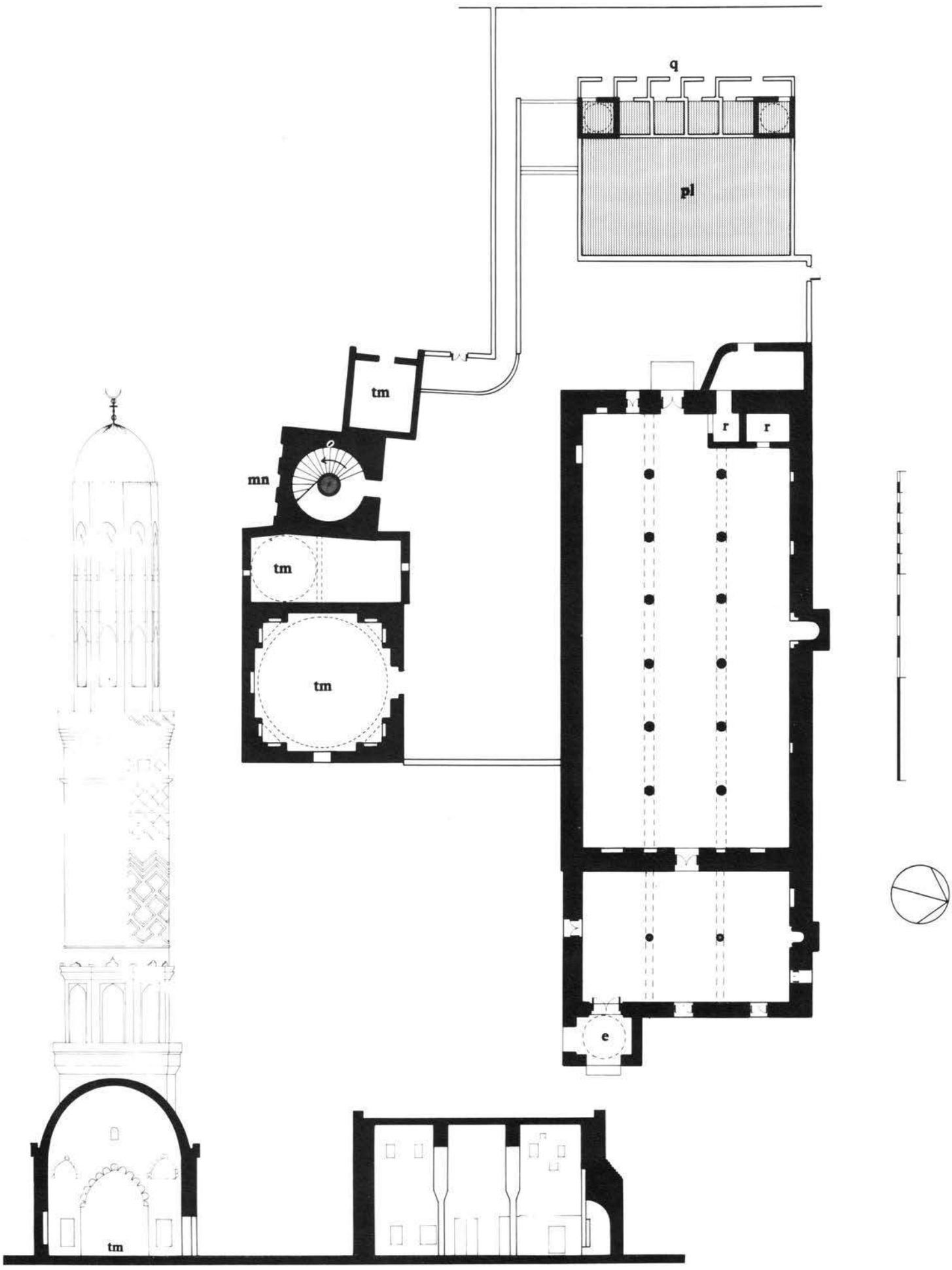
19.17 Mosque of al-Shahīdayn. Interior of the tomb chamber adjoining the southern door of the prayer hall.



19.18 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Exterior.

19.19 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The lower storey of the minaret from the south-eastern side.

Fig. 19.4 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Plan and sections.



the incoming Umayyad governor.[24]

Although the building was extensively rebuilt in 1321/1903, much of the original mosque remains. The prayer hall is constructed with four rows of three columns (with an annex containing another three columns); the stones of the columns are largely pre-Islamic, including some fine capitals and shafts (pl. 19.14). The arcades run transversely across the columns, and rest on modern plaster capitals of vaguely palmette design a favourite pattern used in redecoration since the 12th/18th century. Again the *miḥrāb* stands directly behind the central row of columns, a feature characteristic of early mosques.

A tomb chamber built into the south west corner of the mosque is entered from the courtyard. It contains three small wooden tombs which are simple and unembellished (pl. 19.17). The minaret was built after 1302/1884-5.

The *mosque of Ibn al-Ḥusayn* near the Sā'ilah is another ancient foundation, known originally as Masjid al-Ṣawma'ah. It was built, or rebuilt, by al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah, a *mawlā* of the Banū Ziyād, the rulers of Zabīd, at the close of the 4th/10th century.[25] It was further renovated by Imām Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn, who died in 656/1258-9. In 1355/1936-7 it was extensively redecorated in a folk idiom with bright painting (pl. 38) and an additional bay was added at the southern end. At the same time a splendid high minaret in patterned brickwork was built in the entrance court; it carries a stone inscription recording the date.

Jāmi' al-Madrasah (fig. 19.4 and pls. 19.18-19.32) is said by al-Ḥajarī[26] to stand on the site of a structure which was the original small mosque built by Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, the renowned Companion of the Prophet. It was originally called Masjid al-Azhar. This was rebuilt or extended in 664/1265-6, for this date appears on an inscription inserted into the wall of the minaret on the northern side. Indeed it is said by the worshippers that the main prayer hall as it now stands was built at this time. In 845/1441-2 a restoration and addition(?) was made by Sharaf al-Dīn, a fact recorded on a stone found in the south eastern corner which is now in the Ministry of Public Works. It was further extended by Imām al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā in 926/1519-20 along with the erection (or rebuilding?) of the minaret, presumably in the form in which it remains today. At the same time he built the ablution places, the well and the cemetery to the north, in which his son is buried,[27] probably in the large free-standing tomb structure now known as al-Abyaḍayn. Finally, to the south of the gateway, a small tomb was built for Sayyid Zayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Imām al-Qāsim who died in 1123/1711-12.

There is some evidence in the outside stonework of the southern wall of the prayer hall that it is of ancient construction. This early stonework stops short of the south western corner, suggesting that the earliest mosque, if the sources are right, may have been approximately two-thirds of the area of the present prayer hall, and that a substantial part of its outer walls remain.

Internally, the prayer hall has short cylindrical stone columns, 3m high, arranged in two transverse rows of six columns each. These carry square capitals with curved and bevelled corners growing from the columns, and from these high stilted four-centred arches rise to support the transverse walls on which the roof rests. On stylistic grounds these arcades and the capitals date from the same period as the separate prayer hall alongside, which is discussed below;[28] but local opinion has it that the columns and probably the present walls of the prayer hall date from 664/1265-6, except for a few earlier sections.

A separate prayer hall further east is entered through a doorway from the main prayer hall, the *qiblah* walls of the two being contiguous. There is a separate doorway to the street in the south east corner. This room has a bold *miḥrāb* design which is matched by a niche above the windows in the southern wall (pls. 19.24 and 19.25). Both have as their essential pattern a large five-cusped arch with the bottom lobe turning into a convex circle on each side. The five concave cusps are three-quarter circles, the lower four of the *miḥrāb* containing shell motifs, the central one having a pattern which appears to be calligraphic. In the case of the *miḥrāb* these large cusps frame the smaller arch of the *miḥrāb* recess, itself a scalloped semi-dome standing on two engaged columns; at the back of the *miḥrāb* is an emblazoned shield in low relief.[29] Around the whole is a wide calligraphic band with three projecting bosses, on the eastern side of which is a plaster bracket, presumably for an oil lamp. The entire *miḥrāb* is obscured by centuries of whitewash so that the inscriptions cannot be read.

The *miḥrāb* and possibly the whole room, appear to be additions made in 845/1441-2 by Sharaf al-Dīn.[30]

Returning to the main prayer hall, the *miḥrāb* has an upper arch which closely resembles that of Qubbat Ṭalḥah, discussed below;[31] this suggests a date for it in the second half of the 11th/17th century; it seems likely to be a later addition to an earlier *miḥrāb* of which the lower part remains.

The south eastern tomb, a free-standing building with a fine interior embellished with recessed panels and squinches crowned with cusped arches (pls. 19.26, 19.28-29), is also reputed to be the work of Sharaf al-Dīn. This seems unlikely, however, for in spite of its architectural sophistication the decoration is simpler and in a cruder style. It seems more probable that it was erected by Imām al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā who also added the minaret in 926/1519-20. The dome, which was rebuilt in the early years of the 14th/20th century, appears to have been originally pierced with a pattern of top lights; these have been plastered over internally.

The minaret, like the tomb a freestanding building, is oriented so that its sides point to true north, not slighly east of north, as do the axes of the mosques of Ṣan'ā'. It is hard to see any explanation for this deviation unless the minaret was sometimes used for an astronomical or chronometric purpose.

The minaret, entirely built in baked brick, rises in three stages, first square, then polygonal, then cylindrical, to a circular balcony which is corbelled out from the main drum. Above this level the minaret continues in polygonal form before being capped by a fluted dome. The lower square storey has the same twisted rope ornament as is used as a cornice to Shibām mosque.[32] Below there are three arches on each face, the central one containing long inscriptions on the northern and southern sides, the remainder patterns of baked ceramic green discs and rosettes set into the plaster and now whitewashed over (pl. 19.32). The same green discs act as a field to the twisted rope ornament; exactly similar discs were used for decoration in Byzantine buildings in Greece and Turkey.[33] Six pointed stars containing circles complete the decoration of the lower storey, above fields containing calligraphy and lattice patterns. A heavy cornice with guttae, a calligraphy band and a row of arched niches crowns this level and separates it from the polygon which rises above. This in turn has an arched niche within a rectangular field on each face.

24 Cf. above p. 52, n.16. As the first Umayyad Caliph, Mu'āwiyah, appointed his governor over Ṣan'ā', Busr b. Abī Arṭāh al-'Amirī al-Qurashī, and despatched him there, 'Alī's governor, 'Ubaydullāh b. al-'Abbās departed and left his infant sons, Qutham and 'Abd al-Raḥmān in the city under the care of their maternal uncles.

25 *Masājid Ṣan'ā'*, 4.

26 *Masājid*, 96; *Ghāyat al-amānī*, 662.

27 Ibid, loc. cit., says the son was Ibrāhīm who died in 933/1526-7.

28 The style is similar to work of the 6th/12th century in Cairo, e.g. Mosque of Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'i'.

29 Although there is a no *miḥrāb* exactly like it, the curious large circular curves of the *miḥrāb* are reminescent of the floor patterns of the Tomb of Ghanī Bek al-Ashrafī in Cairo, 830-1/1427. In particular the low relief pattern at the back of the *miḥrāb* closely resembles those of the doors in this Cairo tomb.

30 Cf. p.69a seq.

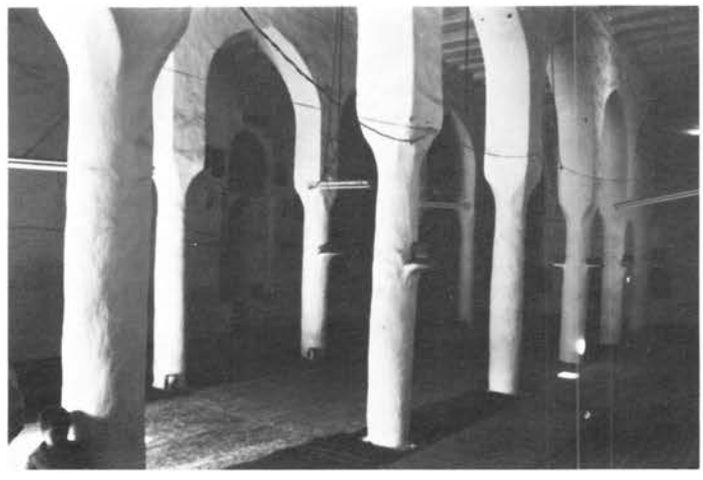
31 Cf. p. 44.

32 Lewcock, and Smith, op. cit.

33 E.g. twelfth and thirteenth century Christian churches at Mesembria, cf. A. Grabar, *Byzantium-Byzantine Art in the Middle Ages,* London, 1966.

19.20 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The ablution cubicles on the left, with the entry to the courtyard of the mosque through a wading pool (*masfā*), centre.

19.21 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The ablution cubicles to the west of the great tank.



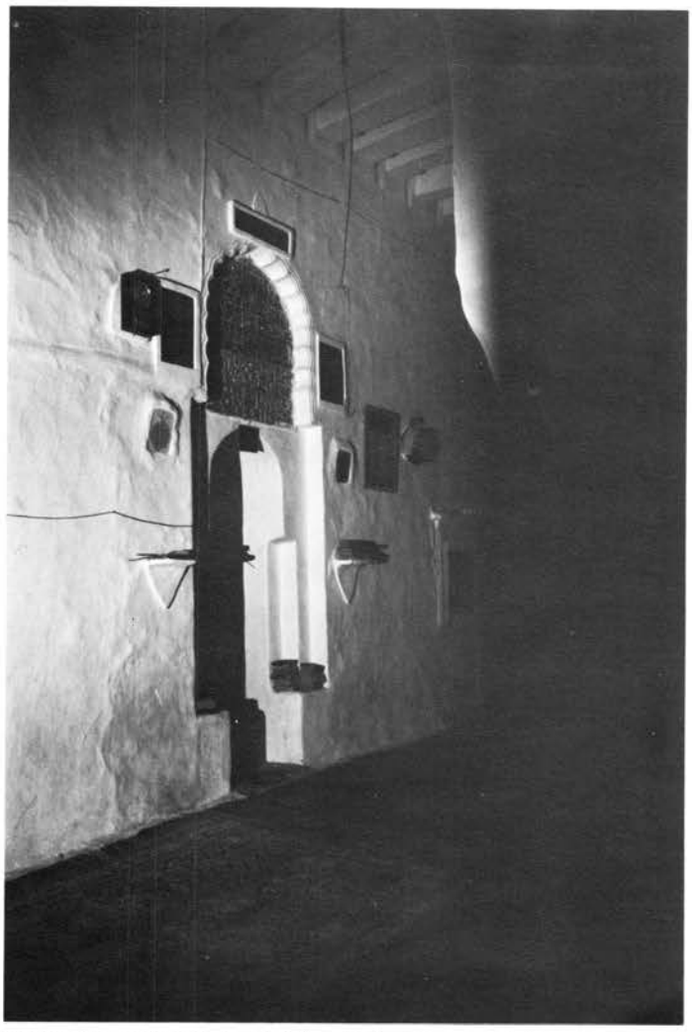
19.22 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Interior of the prayer hall.

A smaller cornice with tri-lobed pinnacles completes this storey. The high cylindrical shaft is patterned on a theme of diamonds and chevrons, the diamonds reappearing on the outside wall of the balcony. A single arched niche in each side of the polygon above is penetrated by a high lancet window; the dome is fluted with sixteen deep flutes which relate to the geometry of the polygon below. The minaret was originally crowned, as the minaret of the neighbouring Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn mosque still is, by a bronze pigeon or dove which swung as a weather vane.[34]

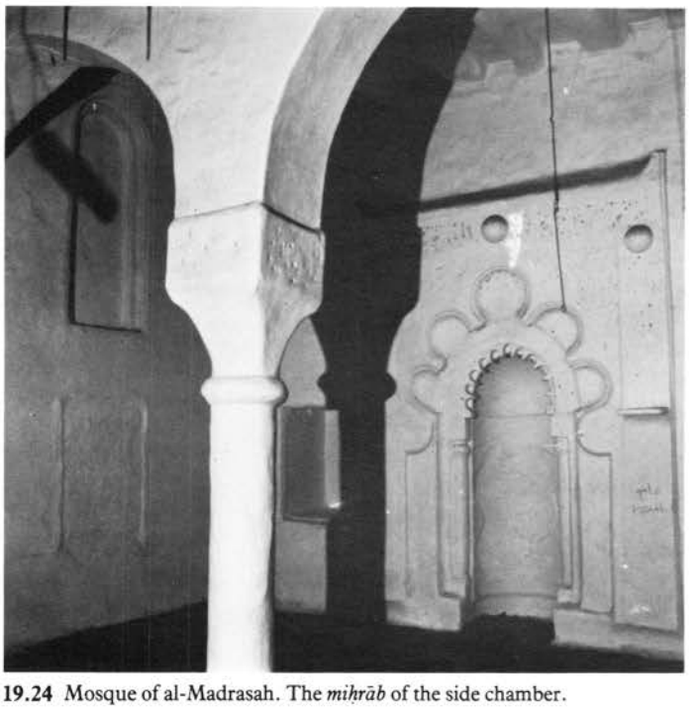
This minaret is believed to be the earliest example in Ṣan'ā' of the patterned brick minaret which has since become the commonest type. The practice of picking out the relief patterning in whitewash against the red brick may not go back to its original design, but may be derived from the habit of using this type of decoration on Ṣan'ā' houses.[35] Evidence that the whitewashing of the relief on the minarets is fairly recent may be seen from the minaret of the Mūsā mosque (pl. 19), which was picked out in white for the first time in 1973, and from the minarets of Jāmi' Ibn al-Ḥusayn[36] and Jāmi' al-'Alamī,[37] which retain their original brick relief without white painting.

The origins of the patterned brick minaret are eastern Islamic. Patterned brickwork characterized the minarets of the Ghaznavids

34 For the possible symbolism of this feature see p. 340, n. 44.
35 Cf. p.340b.
36 Built 1355/1936-7. See p.361a.
37 Built ca.1240/1824.

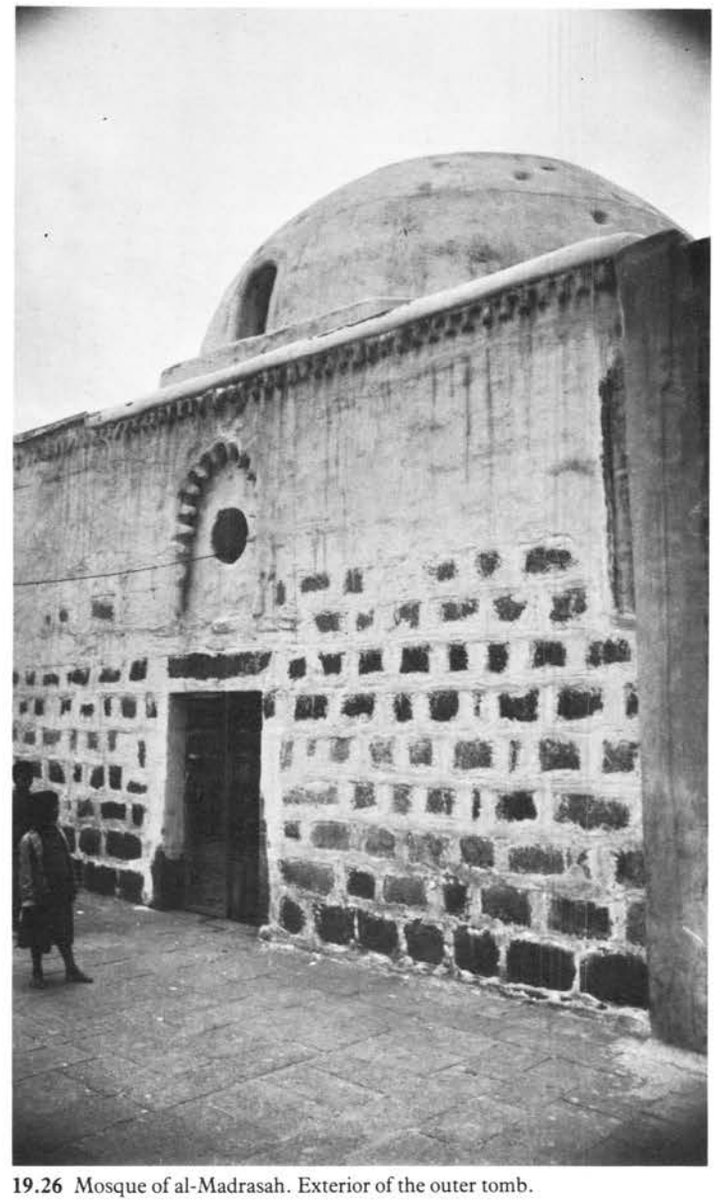


19.23 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The *miḥrāb* of the prayer hall.



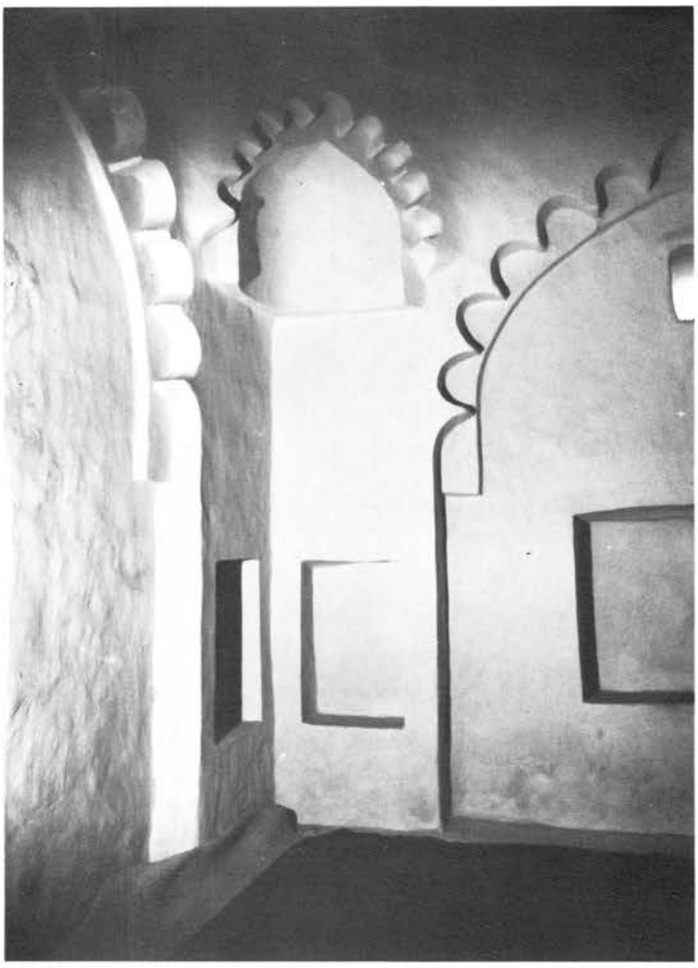
19.24 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The *miḥrāb* of the side chamber.

19.25 Mosque of al-Madrasah. The wall opposite the *miḥrāb* in the side chamber, containing a blind five-lobed arch.

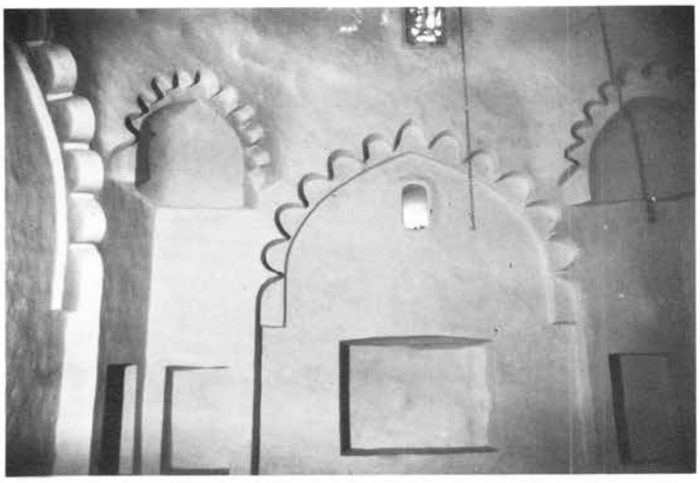


19.26 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Exterior of the outer tomb.

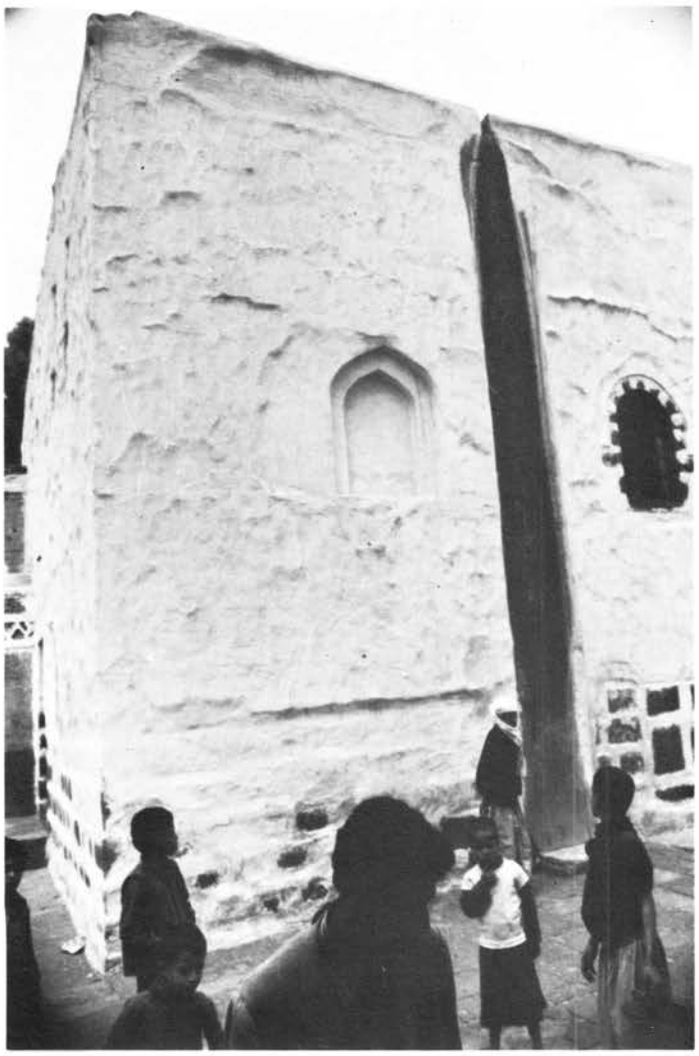
19.27 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Inscription on the outer tomb.



19.28 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Interior of the outer tomb.



19.29 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Interior of the outer tomb.



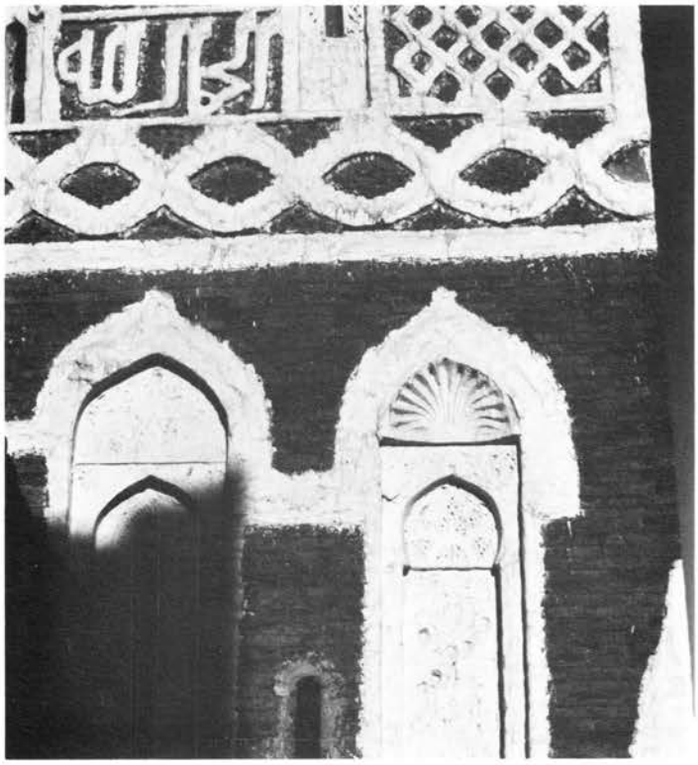
19.30 Mosque of al-Madrasah. South west corner of the prayer hall.

in the early 6th/12th century, and appeared at about the same time in Iran and Iraq, in which countries it remained fashionable for many centuries.

Between the minaret of al-Madrasah and the large domed tomb a narrower tomb with two domes separated by an arch was inserted. This seems to have been done some time afterwards, and is a lower and thinner-walled, though richly decorated, plastered construction. The domes are carried on squinch arches filled with stalactite ornament, and fine calligraphic bands run around the walls above and below the squinches. The transverse

19.31 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Inscription found near the second tomb.

19.33 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Inscription on the minaret.



19.32 Mosque of al-Madrasah. Detail of the lower storey of the minaret shown in pl. 19.19.

arch separating the two domes has a scalloped archivolt with an ornamented lower face.

The early 12th/18th century tomb of Sayyid Zayd[38] is now in ruins, but appears to have been decorated in a simplified form of the same style.

The ablution area is well arranged, with a large pool backed by a row of smaller pools divided by walls for private ablutions. A low domed ablution room terminates the row at either end (pls. 19.20, 21).

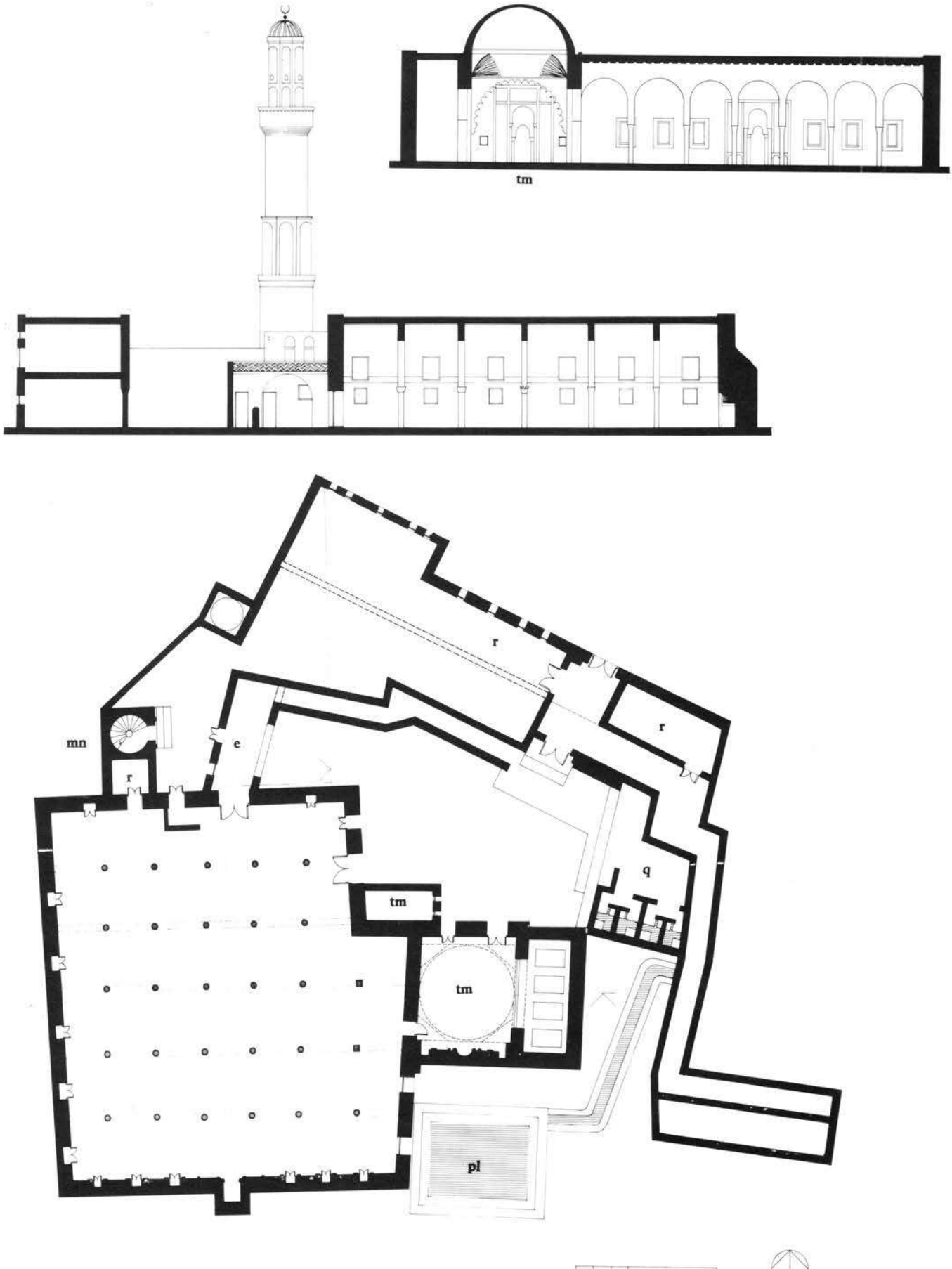
Al-Filayḥī mosque (fig. 19.5, pls.19.34-48;27) is said by al-Ḥajarī[39] to have been built by al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh al-Filayḥī, of a family from the Thulā district, who was afterwards buried there, in 665/1266-7, a date recorded on an inscription inside the mosque. It was extended in the first half of the 10th/16th century, the Imām al-Mutawakkil adding areas to the north and west.

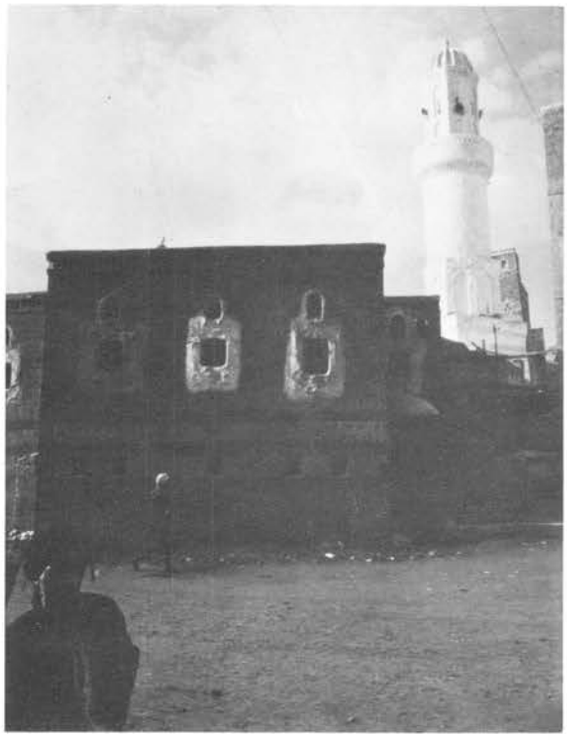
The prayer hall of the mosque is very large, extending more than 18 by 20m, with three rows of six columns in the front part and two rows by five columns behind.

The shafts of the columns are made of small circular blocks of hard stone mortared together. Above them rise capitals of two types. The two transverse rows on the south, and the two on the north, have capitals similar to those described in the mosque of al-Madrasah (above), although painted differently in recent times. The central row has capitals of a different type, an exaggerated

38 See p. 361a
39 Op. cit., 90.

Fig. 19.5 Mosque of al-Filayhī. Plan and sections.





19.34 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Exterior with some of the cabins for students over the ablution section appearing in the foreground.

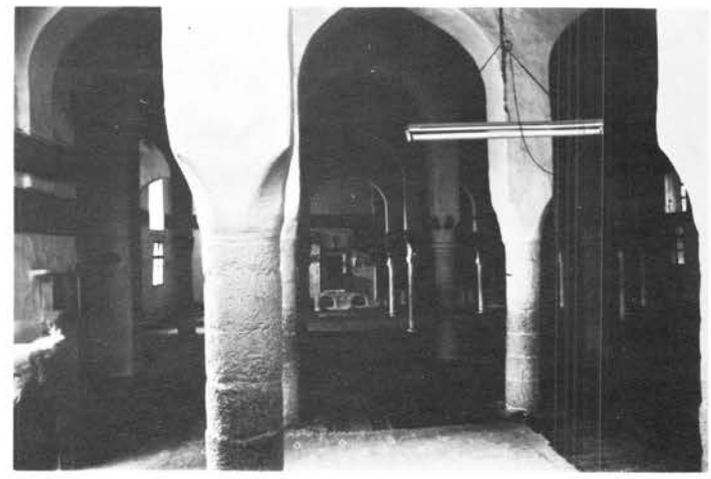
19.35 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Courtyard with the two tomb chambers on the left.

palmette which in other mosques seems characteristic of the 12th/18th centuries or later. There is relief decoration on the upper arches of the arcades which is apparently work of the same century.

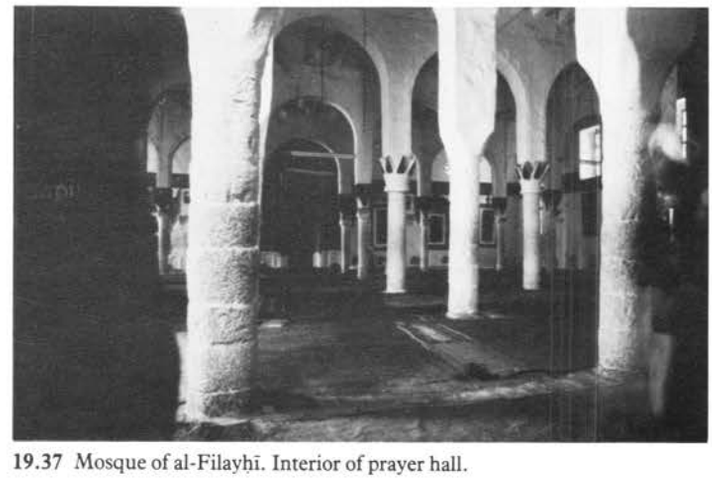
The arcades are stilted high above the capitals, those of the southern two rows having four-centred arches like those of the mosque of al-Madrasah, while the remainder have semi-circular arches. Furthermore, only the first four arches in each row inside the door have pointed arches; the two eastern arches in each of these southern rows are semi-circular.

From this evidence and a consideration of the plan it seems likely that the original mosque survives in the south western part of the prayer hall, the original *qiblah* wall being replaced by the present central transverse row of columns at the same time as the tomb chamber to the west was built, that is in the first half of the 10th/16th century.

Subsequently, the mosque was repaired, and the capitals in the central row of columns (which at that time stood next to the *qiblah* wall) were replaced by more ornate examples. Al-Ḥajarī mentions that Imām al-Mahdī 'Abbās 'added to it and rebuilt its

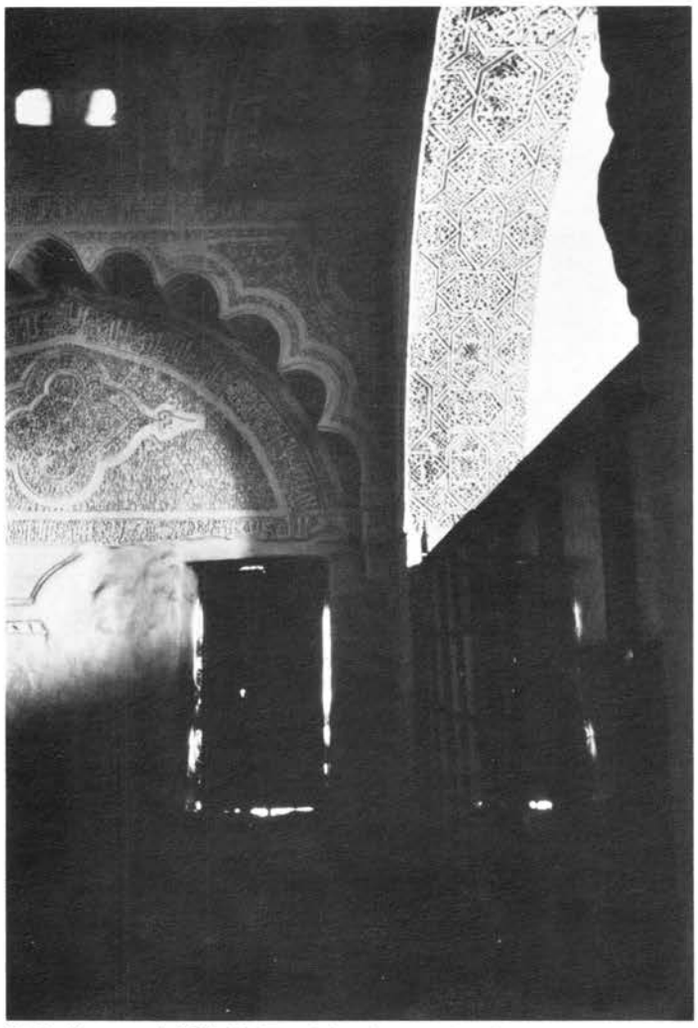


19.36 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Interior of prayer hall.



19.37 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Interior of prayer hall.

19.38 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber, interior, at the entrance end.



19.39 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber, another view.

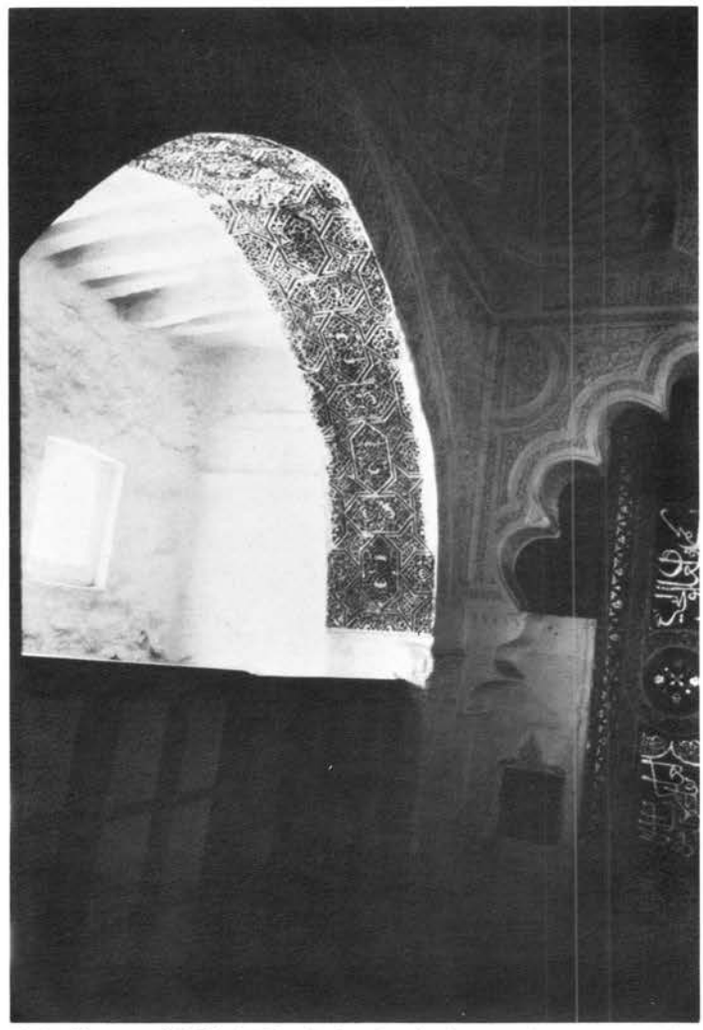
19.40 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Arch across the entrance end, showing the decoration.

ablution places' in 1170/1756-57.[40]

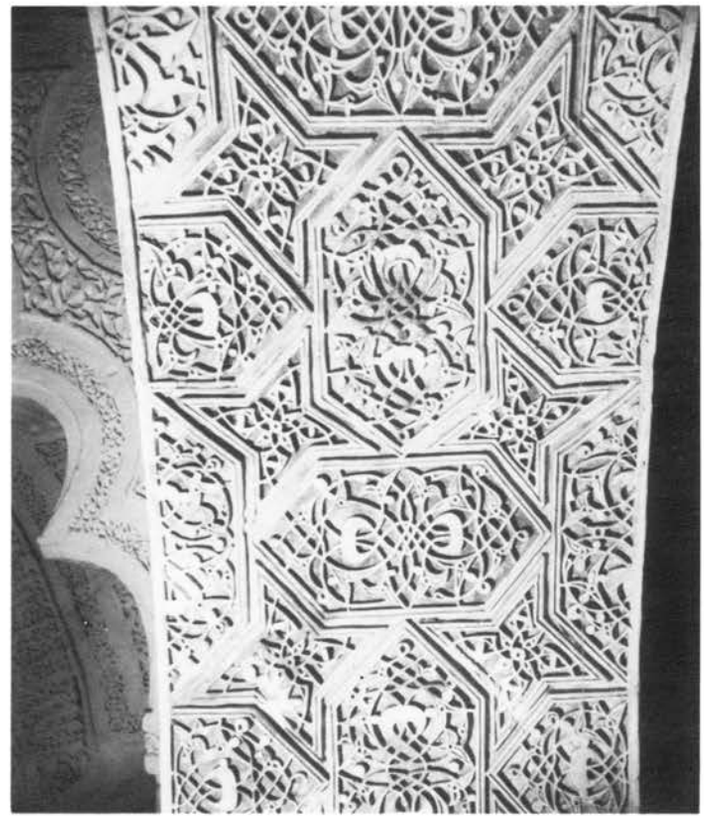
The northern part of the present prayer hall seems to be work of the late 12th/18th century, when the *qiblah* wall was moved forward again adding two transverse bays in which the capitals of the new columns were made to match those of the south.[41] Al-Ḥajarī reports that in 1194/1780-81, Sīdī Muḥsin b. Muḥammad Fāyi' made a 'useful' extension to the north of the previous

40 Ibid, 90.

41 The southern capitals were then in a much better state of preservation than they are now, apparently; for the northern capitals have roll mouldings and impost blocks of which only the faintest traces remain in the southern ones.

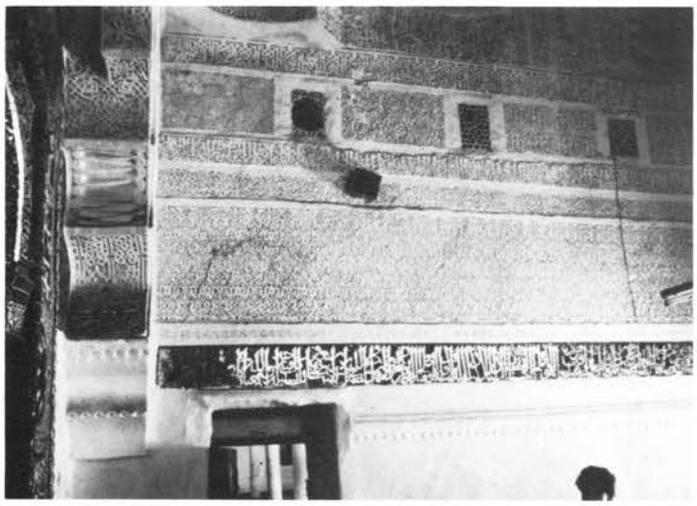


19.41 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Arch across the annex containing the tombs.

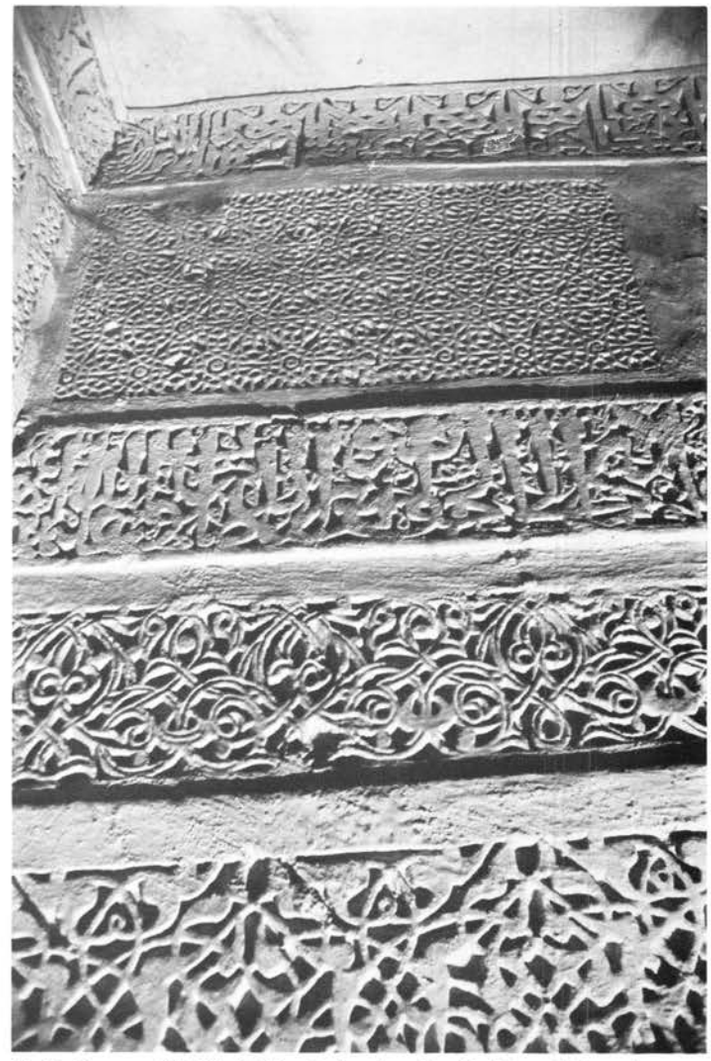


19.42 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Detail of the decoration on the soffit of the arch over the tombs.

19.43 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Squinch arches carrying the dome.



19.44 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. General view of the wall adjoining the main prayer hall.



19.45 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Detail of the wall decoration.

extensions 'upon which he expended a great deal of money'.[42]

The most interesting part of the mosque is the domed tomb chamber to the west (pl. 27, pls. 19.38-48), which is magnificently decorated in gypsum plaster. Following al-Ḥajarī, this appears to have been built by al-Imām al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā in the first half of the 10th/16th century.[43] This dating accords with a certain similarity of the decoration to that of the 'Āmiriyyah mosque at Radā', known to have been built ca. 918/1512. It is a style which owes a good deal to the precedent of the Rasūlid royal tombs of the Ashrafiyyah in Ta'izz, built in the 8th/14th century.[44]

Although the dome has lost all its ornament, the walls below that level, the *miḥrāb* and the squinch arches supporting the dome retain their original splendour. Panels of intricate geometrical and floral ornament intermingle with bands of calligraphy in two contrasting styles, elaborated Kūfic and flowing superimposed *naskhī*. An unusual feature is the use of linenfold pattern in some of the archivolts of the large scalloped arch which frames the *miḥrāb*. This has the aesthetic advantage that folds resemble the flutes of the squinch arches above, thus linking the two elements across the varied wall-space between them.

The decoration of the soffit of the arch separating the tomb chamber from the main domed space is outstanding. The stucco relief retains its ancient colouring, much faded, of olive, blue and vermilion, outlined in white. The design and workmanship of this pattern place it among the finest of its kind in the Yemen, although many other areas of pattern and calligraphy in the room almost equal it.

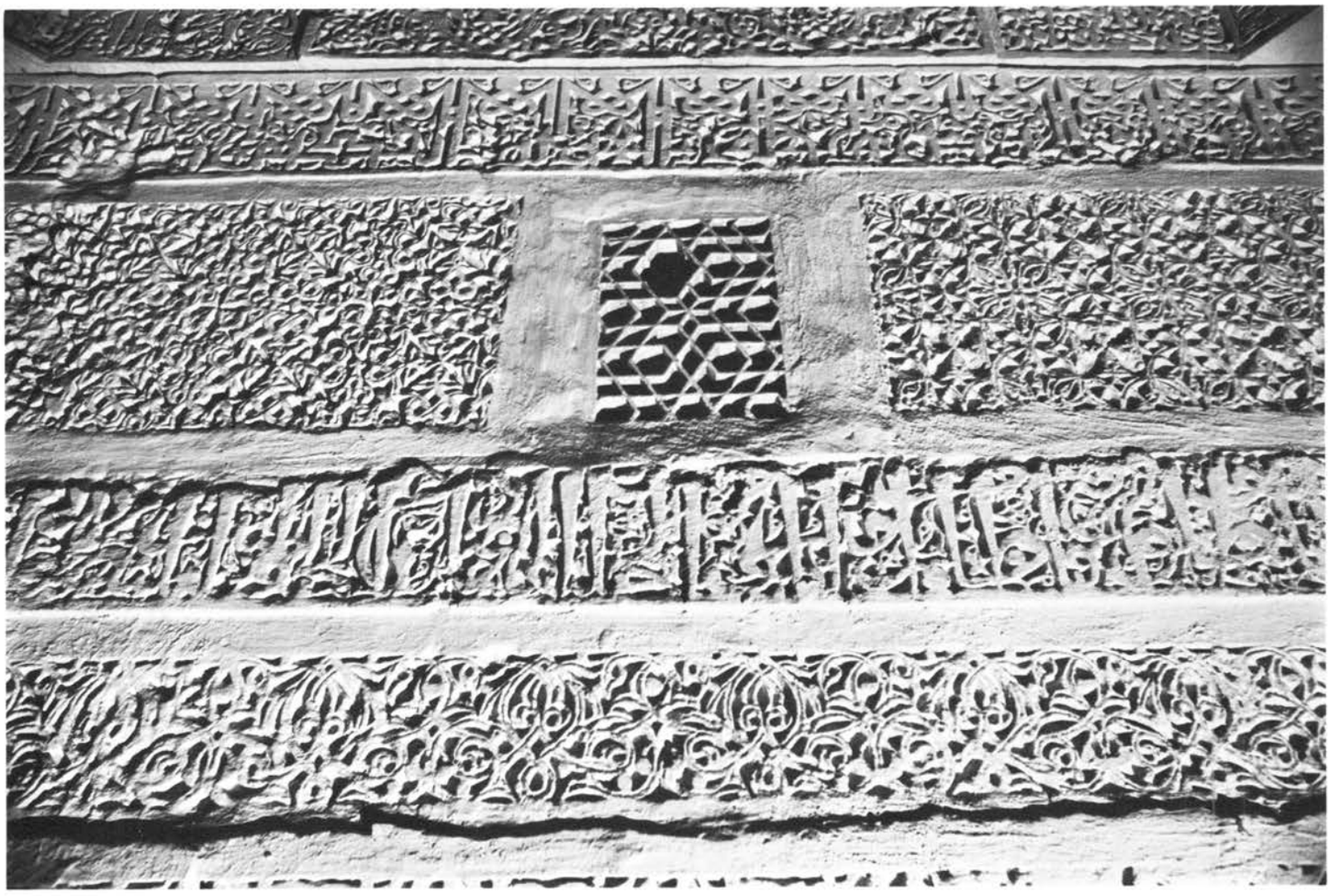
The *miḥrāb* (pl. 27) is visually recessed by being set within its scalloped arch. It is beautifully designed and proportioned, one arch on columns being set within another, the height of the first, the top of the *miḥrāb* niche, being emphasized by circular bosses at the same level in the surrounding calligraphic frame. These mark half the height of the outer frame, which turns at the upper corners by the felicitous device of curving the line of the inner frame up and outwards to form a lozenge-shape on each side. Finally the inner and outer bands of the frame intertwine, so that they appear to be made of two continuous straps passing under and over each other.[45]

The four tombs in the adjoining chamber are entirely plain.

Al-Ḥajarī mentions two 'graves' near (?) the mosque, both dating from the 8th/14th century, one of which is the grave of the father of Imām Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā.[46] It is possible that the tomb chamber referred to above was originally built to house his tomb, although the decoration is apparently later. The other tomb is probably that which is now closed, in the south western corner between the entrances to the prayer hall and the tomb.

The prayer hall retains only a little decoration that equals in quality that of the tomb, partly, no doubt, because it was several times rebuilt subsequently. Even so, the *miḥrāb* has good late

42 Ibid, 90.
43 Ibid, 90.
44 Cf. Lewcock and Smith, 'Three medieval mosques in the Yemen', *Oriental Art*, London, 1974, XX, 2.
45 There is some resemblance in this work to the decoration of the Mausoleum of Ṣāḥib 'Aṭā in Konya, Turkey. 679/1280, cf. O. Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, London, 1971, plate 211.
46 Ibid, 91.



19.46 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Part of the surface decoration of the wall adjoining the main prayer hall. Note the foliated Kūfic inscription at the top and the *naskhī* inscription below.

ornament, and there are remains of ornate *naskhī* inscriptions.

Between the mosque and the street outside is a range of buildings with internal ablution facilities below and lodgings for poor members of the community above.

The minaret is strongly reminiscent of that of the mosque of Farwah b. Musayk (see above). It is therefore likely to be work of the 10th/16th century.

The *mosque of al-Washalī*, known after the Imām al-Washalī (ob. 910/1054-5), the Wushalīs being a famous Sayyid house, is a well-preserved mosque dating from 696/1296-7, and closely resembles the mosque of al-Madrasah in style, plan, and detailed design (pl. 28, pl. 19.49). There is a small adjoining prayer hall with a second *miḥrāb* of the same date. There is no minaret. The arcade adjoining the mosque to the east is possibly the work of the renovations of the Imām al-Mutawakkil Sharaf al-Dīn in the early 10th/16th century referred to by al-Ḥajarī.[47]

The *mosque of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* was built by the Imām Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of Imām al-Mahdī 'Alī b. Muḥammad. The former died in 793/1390; his large domed tomb lies to the west of the entrance courtyard, and contains both his tomb and that of his son al-Manṣūr 'Alī b. Muḥammad, who died in 840/1436, as well as the tomb of his wife and other relatives.[48]

The prayer hall, on the east of the courtyard, belongs to the same type as the 7th/13th century parts of al-Madrasah and al-Filayḥī. That is, it has transverse arcades with characteristic capitals (closely resembling those of the other two mosques) above which are high stilted four-centred arches. The latter have been re-decorated with scallops in relief around the edges, apparently during work on an extension made by Shaykh Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Shāṭibī in 1128/1715. There is an inscription in plaster recording this extension inside the mosque. The *miḥrāb* dates from the same period.

The tomb chamber is not open; externally it has fine scalloped arches retaining traces of ogee frames in deep relief and an alabaster plaster dado of strong key patterning (pls. 19.51-2).

The chief glory of the mosque is its minaret, which rivals that of al-Madrasah and is in a closely parallel style. It was built by the Ottoman governor Sinān Pasha, in the early 11th/late 16th century, as is recorded on a white carved stone inscription above the doorway. The minaret is crowned by a deeply fluted dome which carries a bronze weather-vane in the form of a pigeon or a dove.

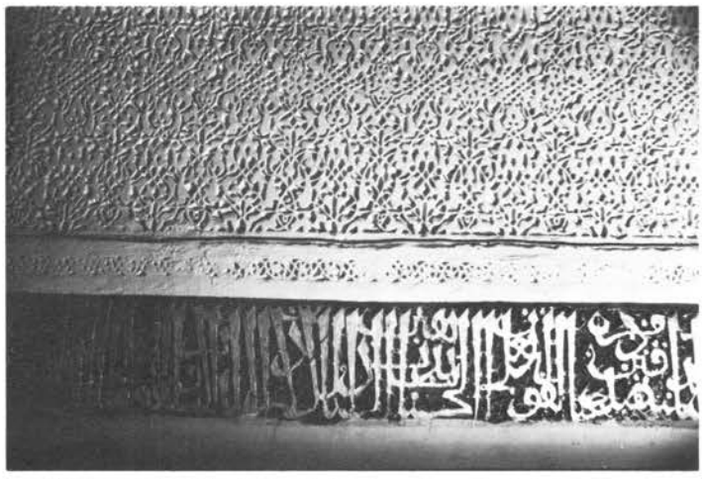
Like al-Filayḥī and a number of other mosques, this mosque has above its entrance a range of rooms intended as lodgings for students (pl. 19.50).

The *mosque of al-Abhar* (pls. 19.54-55) was built by Imām Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad's wife, al-Sayyidah Fāṭimah, daughter of the leader of the Kurds of Dhamār, in 776/1374-5; it was known originally as the mosque of Bint al-Amīr.[49]

This first building survives on the northern end of the site, and the minaret over the entrance arch appears contemporary with it. The latter is modelled on the minarets of the Great Mosque, with the addition of a high band of fluting around the base of the main cylindrical shaft. The prayer hall was extended to the south by the Imām al-Manṣūr al-Ḥusayn (d.1161/1748),

47 Ibid, 127.
48 *Masājid*, 61.
49 *Masājid*, 5.

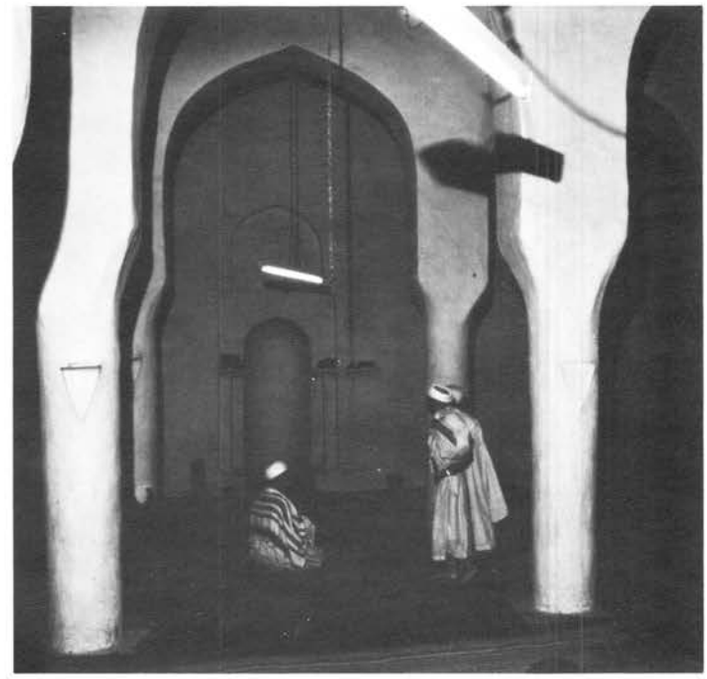
19.47 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Another part of the surface decoration of the wall adjoining the main prayer hall.



19.48 Mosque of al-Filayḥī. Tomb chamber. Lower level of the surface decoration of the wall adjoining the main prayer hall.

who also built the domed tomb (see below). The interior of the prayer hall has been redecorated recently.

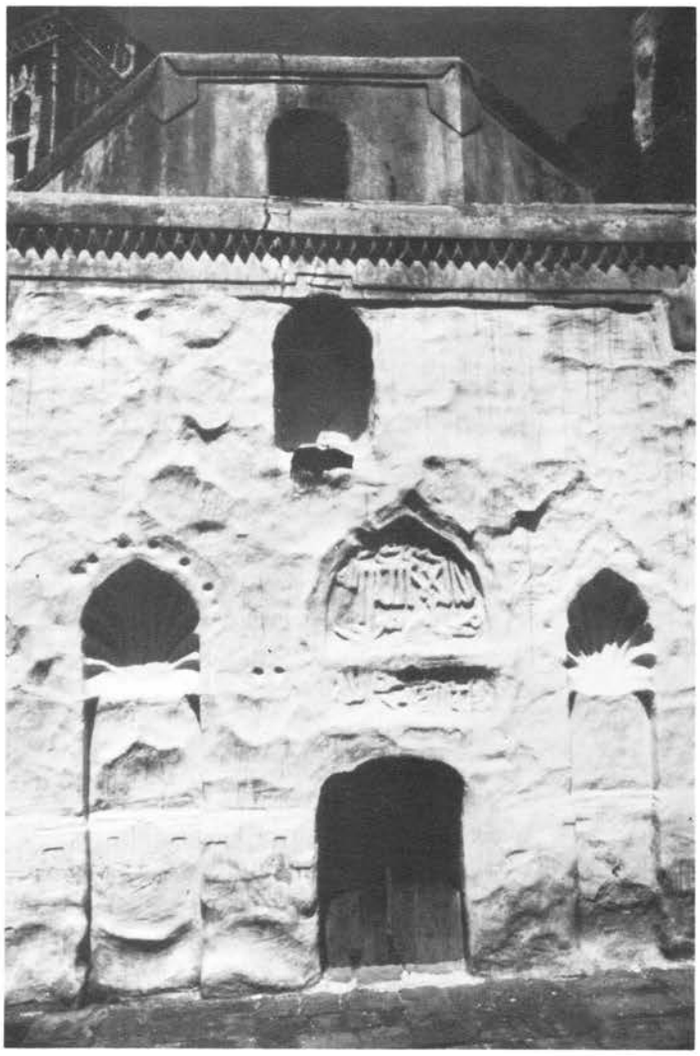
The *mosque of Jamāl al-Dīn* was built before 793/1390, for in that year the oath of allegiance to the new Imām, al-Mahdī Aḥmad, was taken there. There is no minaret. The small prayer hall is fronted by a double arcade which appears to be a later addition (pl. 19.55). The interior is well preserved with high arcades of the Ṣalāh al-Dīn mosque type, without later decoration, resting on simple capitals on cylindrical columns (pl. 19.57)



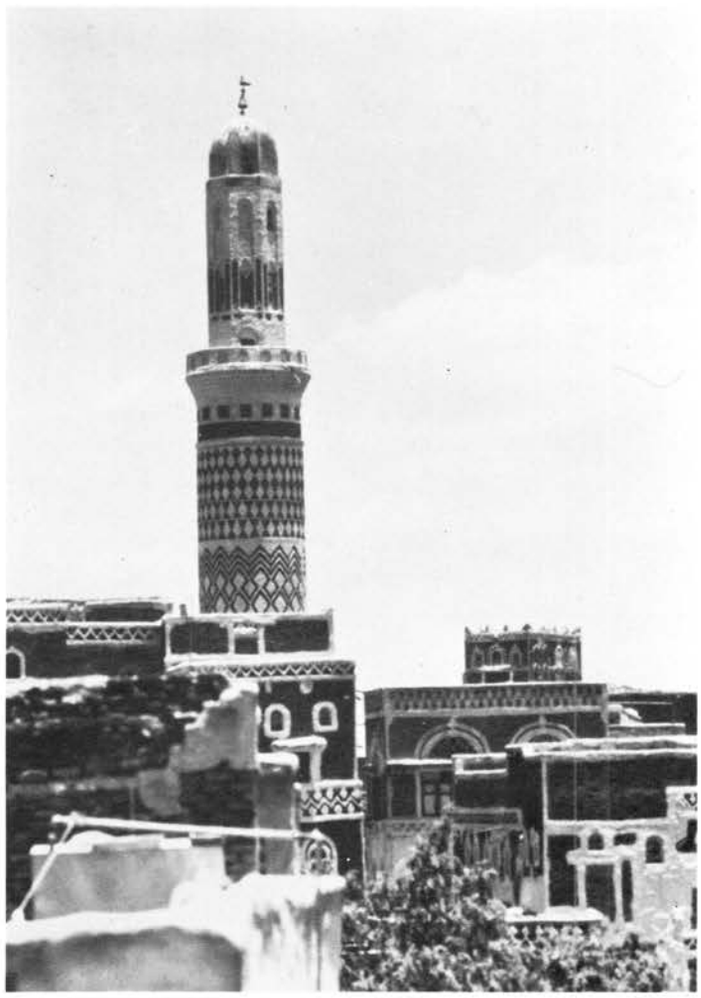
19.49 Mosque of al-Washalī. Interior of the large prayer hall.

19.50 Mosque of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Exterior from the street. The upper windows are those of the students' cabins built over the ablution block.

19.51 Mosque of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Courtyard, with a tomb on the left and the minaret at the back. Entrance to the prayer hall from the arcade on the right.



19.52 Mosque of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The facade of the courtyard tomb.



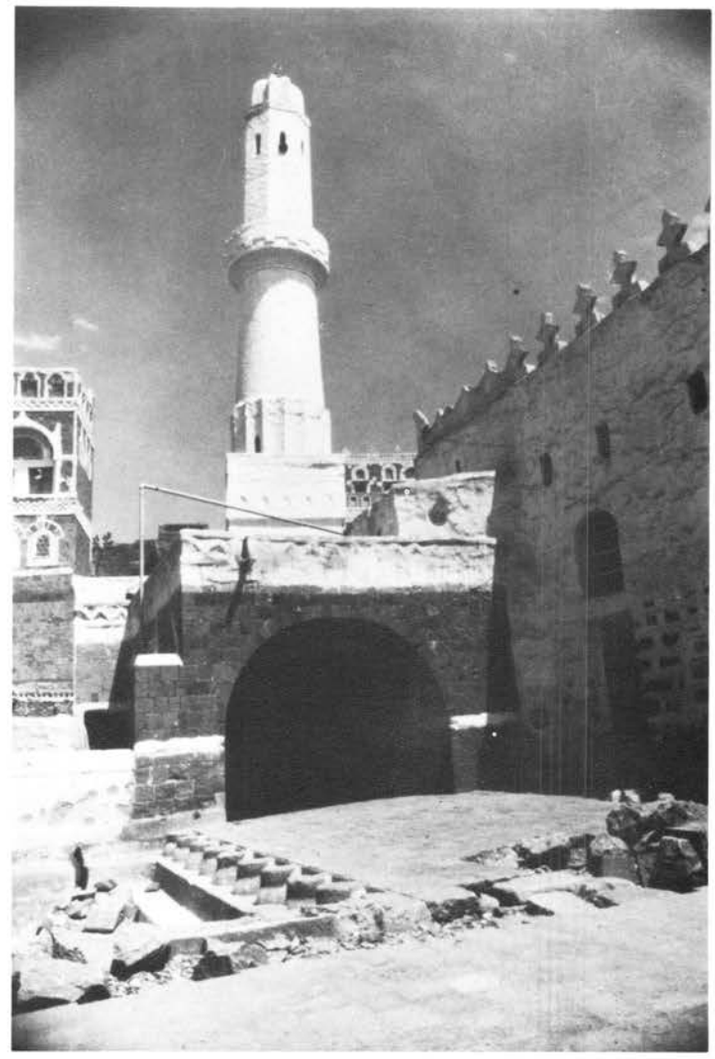
19.53 Mosque of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Minaret.

The *mosque of 'Alī* in the famous Sūq al-Ḥalaqah is probably of very ancient foundation. It is attributed to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who is reputed to have stayed in a house on this site during a visit to Ṣan'ā', according to a relatively late historian.[50] Architecturally it conforms to the same type and the arcading of the prayer hall appears to belong to the 6th or 7th/12th or 13th centuries. There is a quaint low minaret with decoration of a type that is elsewhere thought to belong to the early 10th/16th century (pl. 19.58). In 1350/1932, its well being no longer serviceable, water was led to it from Bīr al-'Abidīn, by an underground channel.

The mosques of Nuṣayr, 'Aqīl and Dāwūd belong to this same type, but were subsequently redecorated. The first mosque (pls. 19.60-61), in the ancient south eastern corner of the city, was built before the 9th/15th century; it was 'renewed' by the Imām al-Manṣūr in 1161/1748,[51] and it has some good decoration from this period. The original columns and capitals were preserved, but the stilted arches are semicircular, probably having been rebuilt. The mosque is without a minaret, as were most mosques built during the period of the Zaydī government. Its court (*ṣawḥ*) has the tomb of an al-Wazīr Sayyid, killed by a stone cannon (?) ball during the siege of the Ṭāhirid 'Āmir (10th/16th century). The second, a small mosque in the sūq near to ruin in the early 10th/16th century, retains its ancient form, although it was rebuilt and extended by Shams al-Dīn, the son of the Imām Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā, in 947/1540. It has a splendid minaret (pl. 30, pl. 19.62), built in 967/1560 by the Amīr Iskandar al-Kurdī (as recorded by an inscription in the Jabbānah), smaller

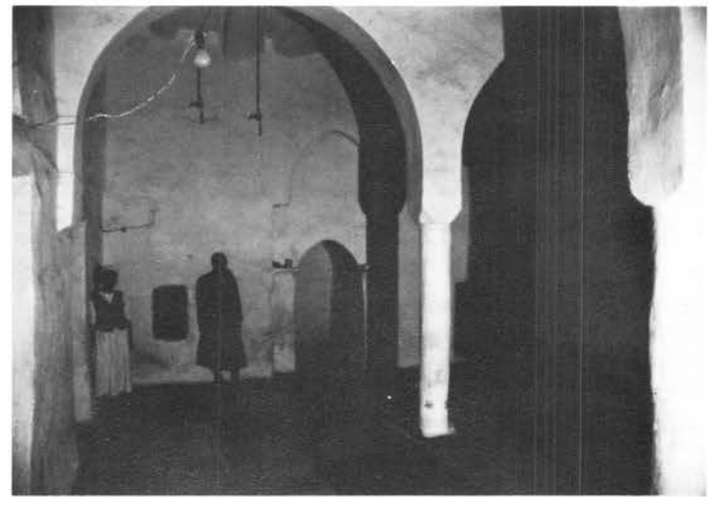
50 *Masājid*, 86. The ascription to 'Alī seems to be rather late.
51 Ibid, 122.

19.54 Mosque of al-Abhar. The minaret and the porch of the mosque from Maydān al-Abhar.



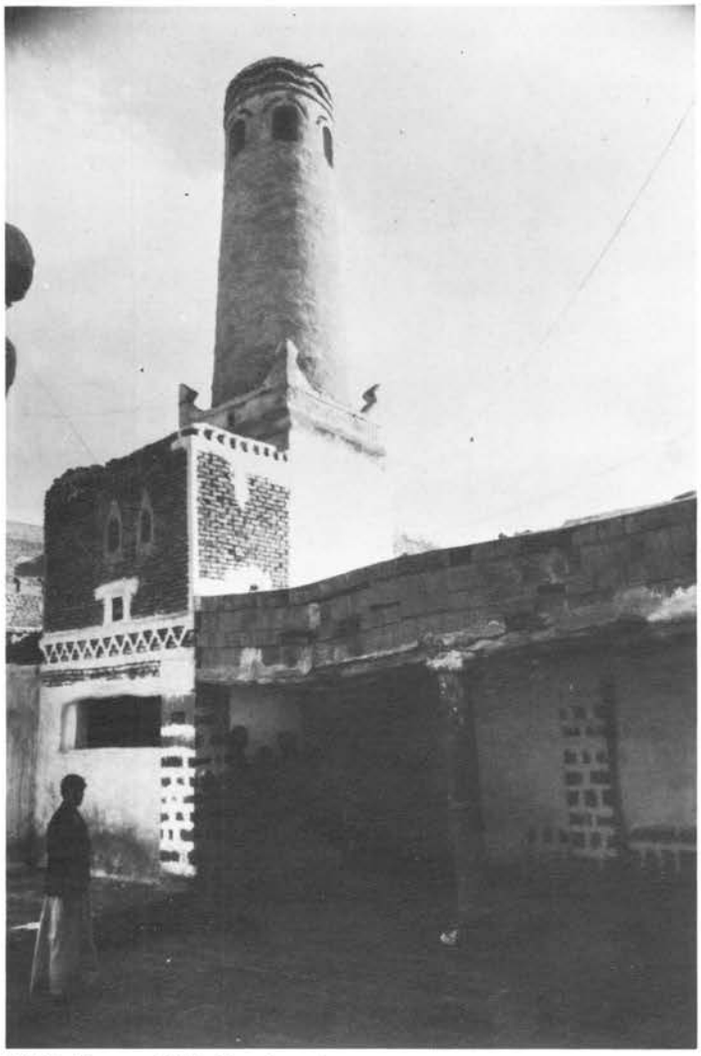
19.56 Mosque of Jamāl al-Dīn. The facade of the prayer hall from the courtyard. With the ablution tank cut in natural rock in the left foreground.

19.55 Mosque of al-Abhar. The courtyard, with the interior arch of the entrance porch in the centre, the ablution pool left and the prayer hall right.

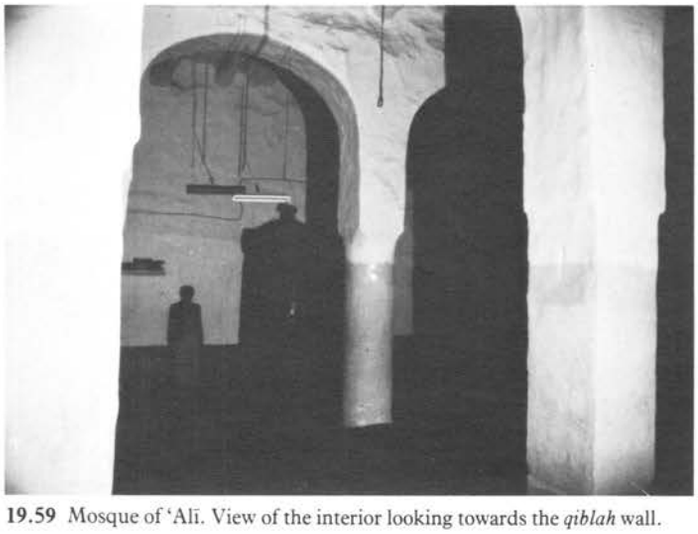


19.57 Mosque of Jamāl al-Dīn. Interior of prayer hall.

than, but with general links to, the slightly earlier minaret of al-Madrasah. The third mosque of Dāwūd near the cattle market, was originally built in the 7th/12th century. It was added to by the Imām al-Mutawakkil Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā in the first half of the 10th/16th century. It was extensively renovated in the present century, when the minaret was built by al-Ḥājj 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muṭahhar 'Uqbah, a merchant of Ṣan'ā' of the learned ulema family 'Uqbah of the Banī Bahlūl.

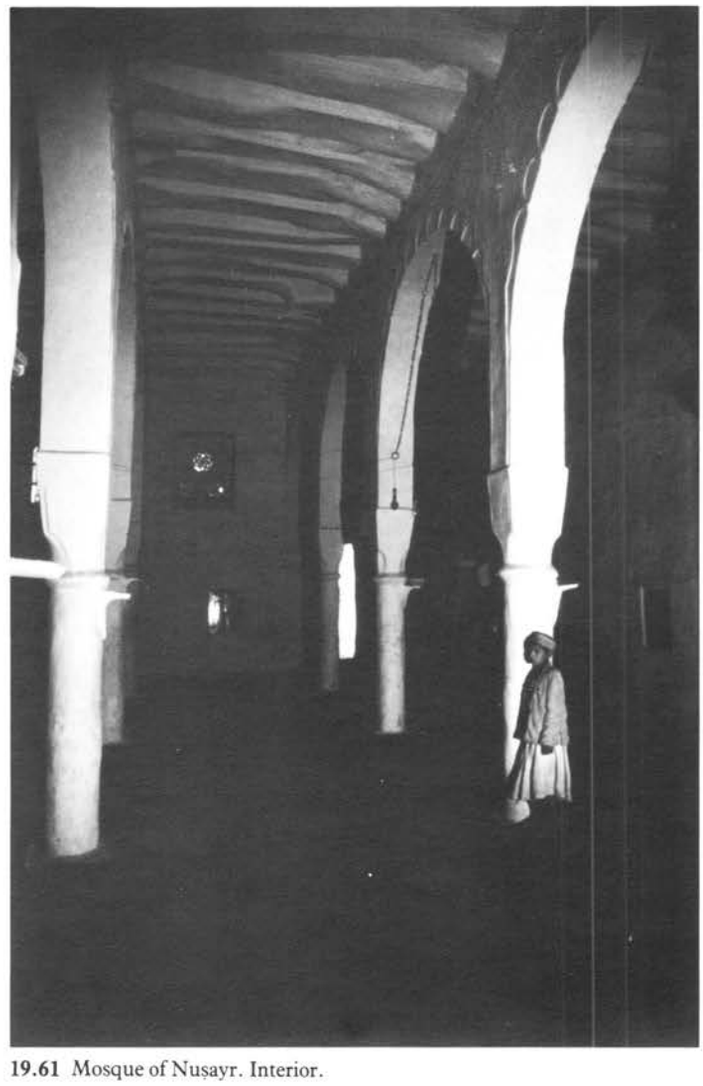


19.58 Mosque of 'Alī. View from the courtyard.



19.59 Mosque of 'Alī. View of the interior looking towards the *qiblah* wall.

19.60 Mosque of Nuṣayr. Exterior of the prayer hall from the courtyard.



19.61 Mosque of Nuṣayr. Interior.

19.62 Mosque of 'Aqīl. Courtyard and minaret.

Mosques of the First Ottoman Occupation

The twin mosques of *Janāḥ* and *al-Madhhab,* which share one minaret, stand on one side of Sūq al-Milḥ (fig. 19.6, pls. 7, 17; 19.63-72). The former seems to be an ancient foundation, as its floor and its courtyard are more than a metre lower than the general level of the sūq, and also than the level of the other mosque, which was built in the 10th/17th century. Unfortunately its ancient name is not identifiable from the early histories, although it may be the mosque referred to by al-Rāzī, but not named by him, which was 'in the lane of Ghumdān'.[52] Al-Rāzī says of the latter, that it was founded about 380-90/990-1000, and renovated after the so-called Qarmaṭian occupation by the son or nephew of Yazīd b. Manṣūr al-Ḥimyarī who 'put the roof over the mosque which it has today.'

The whole of the present mosque belongs to the style which is later than the 5th/11th century. Its earliest parallel in the Yemen is the Rasūlid style of the 7th/13th to 9th/15th centuries, which it resembles in some respects quite closely.[53] The earliest building of its type in Ṣan'ā', however, is the tomb at al-Filayḥī mosque, dating apparently from the first half of the 10th/16th century. The name of this mosque is said by al-Ḥajarī to be taken from Shaykh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Janāḥ al-Ḍamadī al-Qādirī, who died in 991/1583.[54] His commemorative stone inscription is inserted in the south wall (pl.19.70)

The mosque is reached by leaving the sūq down a wide passage-way which passes under the minaret. On the left (east) lies the mosque of al-Madhhab, on the right (west) the mosque of Janāḥ, while directly ahead the passageway opens into an area of public lavatories serving the southern sūq as well as the mosques.

A number of archways containing blocked openings are built into the wall separating the passageway from the mosque of Janāḥ and its arcaded courtyard. The lintels of the openings are now less than a metre above the floor of the passageway. The last arch is higher and through this a door leads to a short flight of steps down which the visitor descends to the domed walkway surrounding the courtyard, which is now used as a *madrasah.* The ablution area consists of a long room adjoining this to the south.

The courtyard has three domed bays on each arm of the ambulatory surrounding it, giving, together with the corner bays, a total of sixteen domes. Pointed arches front the court. The domes placed over the bays on the northern side are so rectangular in shape that they are approaching groined vaults in form.

The prayer hall is composed of two domed rooms, each with its own *miḥrāb.* The western room is considerably smaller than the eastern one, suggesting that it may be older; the inscription of 991/1583 is built into the outside wall of the larger room. A wide arch links the two domed spaces. A row of twenty-four small arched niches encircles the base of each dome above the double squinch arches at the corners. Some of the former contain shell motifs; the remainder are blank or fitted with tiny tracery patterns of hard gypsum containing coloured glass—they were perhaps once windows.

On the eastern side of the passageway two doors lead into the courtyard of the mosque of al-Madhhab, which is on the same level as the passage. This mosque is ascribed by al-Ḥajarī[55] to the period of the first Ottoman occupation, but conforms to the pre-Ottoman type in form; five transverse aisles are separated by high circular arched arcades carried on pairs of columns containing some pre-Islamic fragments.

The minaret is unique in several ways. Not only does it straddle the passageway, but it has no balcony for the muezzin—he has to perform the call to prayer from an internal platform through the small window openings. Its dome differs in shape from the high pointed cones of the Janāḥ mosque alongside.

Qubbat al-Murādiyyah in the citadel (the Qaṣr) (pls. 10 and 11) was built by the governor Murād Pasha in 984/1576, again on the site of an ancient mosque, of which one outside wall remains to the north of the *qubbah.* The minaret was built at the same time.[56] The dome is of an exaggeratedly parabolic shape, of the same type as those of the Janāḥ referred to above.

Al-Bakīriyyah mosque was built by the Ottoman governor Ḥasan Pasha; he named it, as well as the public baths built as a *waqf* to support it, which are now called the Ḥammāmāt al-Maydān, after a client (*mawlā*) of his, Bakīr Bey, to whom he was much attached, who was thrown from his horse during cavalry games in Ṣan'ā'. Ḥasan Pasha built his tomb,[57] and alongside it the mosque was begun in 1005/1597 (fig. 19.7 and pls. 19.73-81).[58]

The design is so completely Ottoman in style that it seems likely to be the work of a Turk, and may even be based, together with the baths, on drawings prepared in Istanbul. The only possible exceptions are the minaret, which belongs to the eastern tradition of patterned brickwork started in Ṣan'ā' as far as we

52 As Sūq al-Milḥ lies on the ancient street running from Ghumdān, next to the Great Mosque, to the Qaṣr, it seems more than likely that the Janāḥ mosque is on the site of the mosque referred to, cf. al-Rāzī, op. cit., 232.
53 Cf. Lewcock, R. B. and Smith, G. R., 'Three medieval mosques in the Yemen', 1 and 2.
54 *Masājid,* 43.
55 Ibid, 99.
56 Ibid, 113-4.
57 Ibid, 17.
58 Loc. cit.

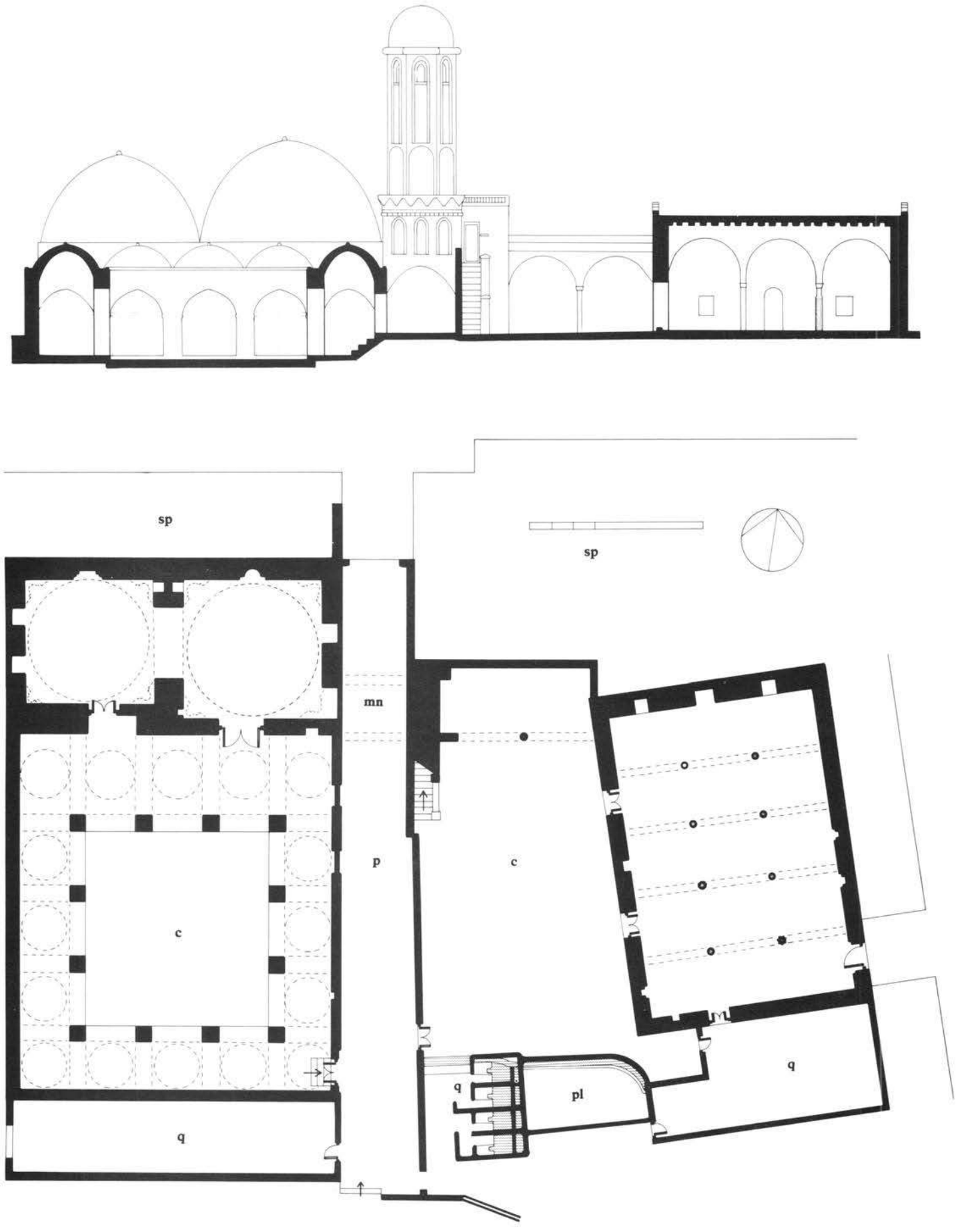
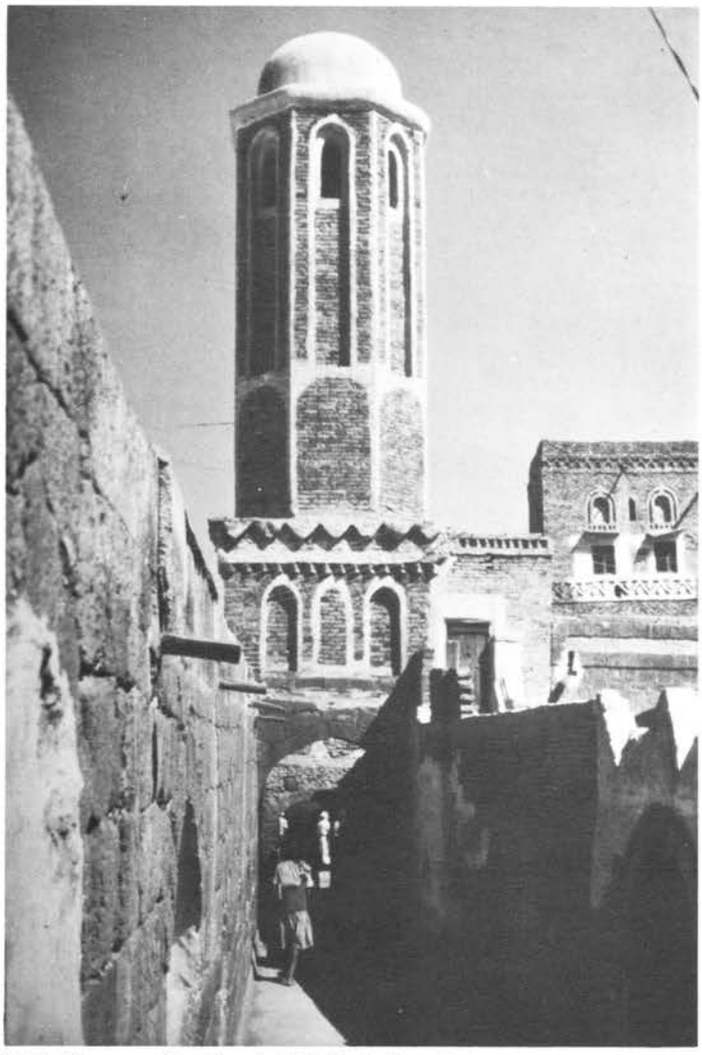


Fig. 19.6 Mosques of Janāh and al-Madhhab. Plan and section, Janāh on the left and al-Madhhab on the right.

19.63 Mosques of Janāḥ and al-Madhhab. Aerial view, looking north. Janāḥ on the left and al-Madhhab on the right.

19.65 Mosque of Janāḥ. The courtyard, with the entrance steps down into it in the left background.



19.64 Mosques of Janāḥ and al-Madhhab. The minaret and the entrance passage between the two mosques, looking north.

19.66 Mosque of Janāḥ. The courtyard, looking towards the facade of the prayer hall.

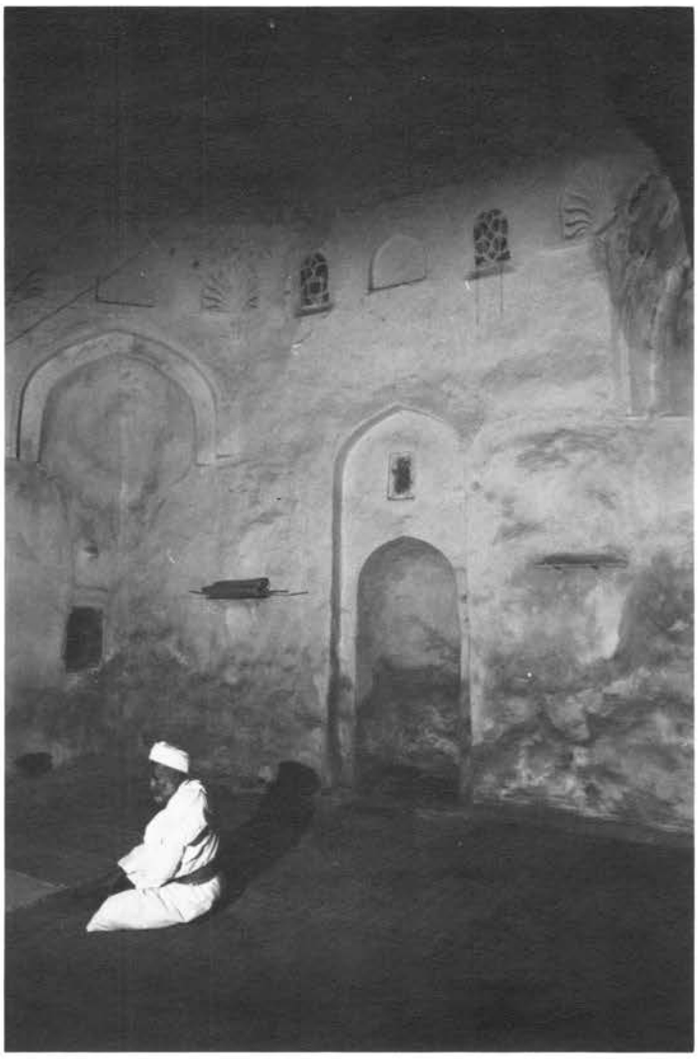
19.67 Mosque of Janāḥ. The eastern domed chamber of the prayer hall, looking across into the western chamber.

know, at the Madrasah mosque seventy years earlier, and the hot and temperate rooms of the baths, which conform to the Yemeni rather than to the Turkish pattern.

The mosque has a wide square prayer hall roofed with a single dome seventeen metres in diameter, with an annex covered by two smaller domes on the northern side. A third small dome in the north eastern corner is built over the sealed tomb chamber. A porch with three decorated domes fronts the mosque on the south.

The paved forecourt is sixty centimetres below the floor level of the mosque, and is completely enclosed, on the east by a covered walkway with the minaret behind it, on the south by the ablution block roofed with four domes and fronted by an open-air ablution pool approached up three steps, and on the west by a large domed porch projecting halfway into the court.

Externally, the mosque is reached from the western side, the porch lying centrally between symmetrical, domed rooms added during the second Turkish occupation, probably at the same time as the redecoration of 1298/1880 which is recorded in an inscription in the prayer hall.



19.68 Mosque of Janāḥ. The eastern domed chamber of the prayer hall.

19.70 Mosque of Janāḥ. Inscription set into the prayer hall wall on the courtyard side.

19.69 Mosque of Janāḥ. The western domed chamber of the prayer hall.

19.71 Mosque of al-Madhhab. Courtyard, with the ablution cubicles in the foreground and the mosque in the background.

The external massing of the forms, cubes surmounted by octagons carrying domes, which build up in scale to the dominating mass of the great dome, is reminiscent of the largest mosques in Istanbul, and particularly of the work of the architect Sinān.[59] There is precedent in Istanbul, too, for the four octagonal turrets at the corners; although in Sinān's mosque of Sulaymān I they are not so clearly visible, in his Sokollu mosque they have become clusters of three, and in his Salīm Mosque at Edirne there are two of them on each corner.

59 Sinān died in 996/1588.

The mosque of al-Bakīriyyah has areas of plaster bas-relief decoration on the outside, somewhat more lavishly applied than is normal in contemporary work in Islam. The porch has a row of decorative fleur-de-lis finials against the sky, for which there is precedent in Sinān's decorations of the Şehzade mosque, although it is a prominent feature of the 'Āmiriyyah mosque in Radā', 125km south east of Ṣan'ā', built in 918/1512. There is also decorative patterning in two coloured stones, characteristically Ottoman in type, but also existing a thousand years earlier in

19.72 Mosque of al-Madhhab. Interior of the prayer hall, looking towards the *qiblah* wall.

19.73 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. First Ottoman occupation.

19.74 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. Courtyard of the mosque.

Ṣan'ā', according to descriptions by historians of al-Qalīs church.[60] Doubtless Byzantine influence played a part in its use in both cases.

The three domes above the porch have fine plaster decorations, the central one being the most elaborate (pl. 19.77). They combine Ottoman motifs with overall geometric patterns of a type that had been used earlier in the Yemen.

The architectural treatment of the interior conforms closely with the ideas of Sinān. Decoration is concentrated around windows, doors, and the large arches of the octagon which rises within the square and the *miḥrāb*. An important exception is the stalactite ornament of the pendentures, a feature used by Sinān to draw attention to the transition from the square plan to the octagon and thence the circle of the dome, a transition which might otherwise pass unnoticed, so cleverly are the columns of the octagon fitted within the square (pl. 19.78). The panel ornaments of *miḥrāb*, doors and windows are again of pure Ottoman type (pl. 19.80). The throne intended for the use of the Turkish governor stands in front of the south wall. From its top, reached up a tiny staircase, the imām of the mosque still leads the prayer (pl. 19.79). Almost identical thrones survive in mosques designed by Sinān, such as the mosque of Çoban Mustafa at

60 See p.45b.

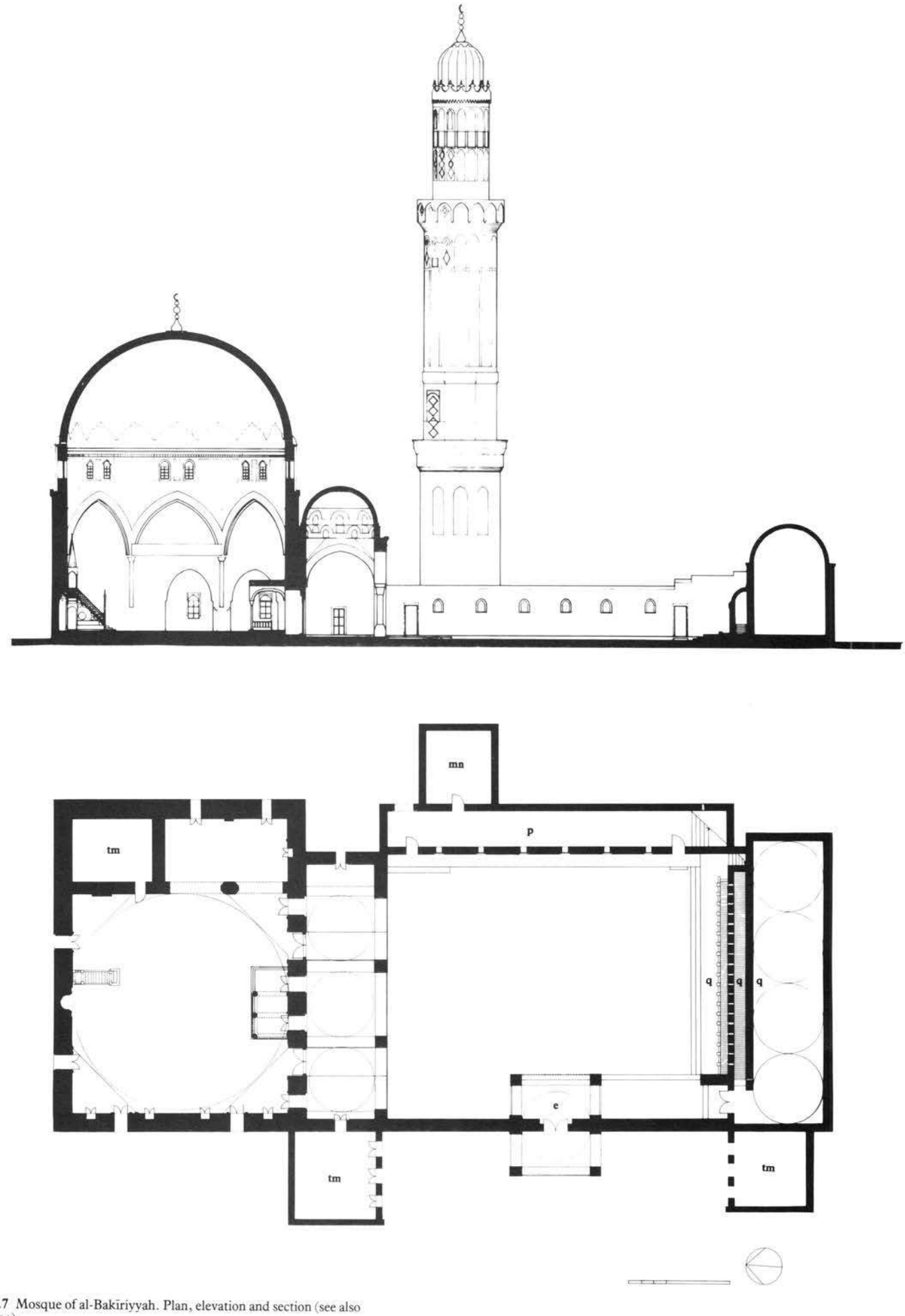
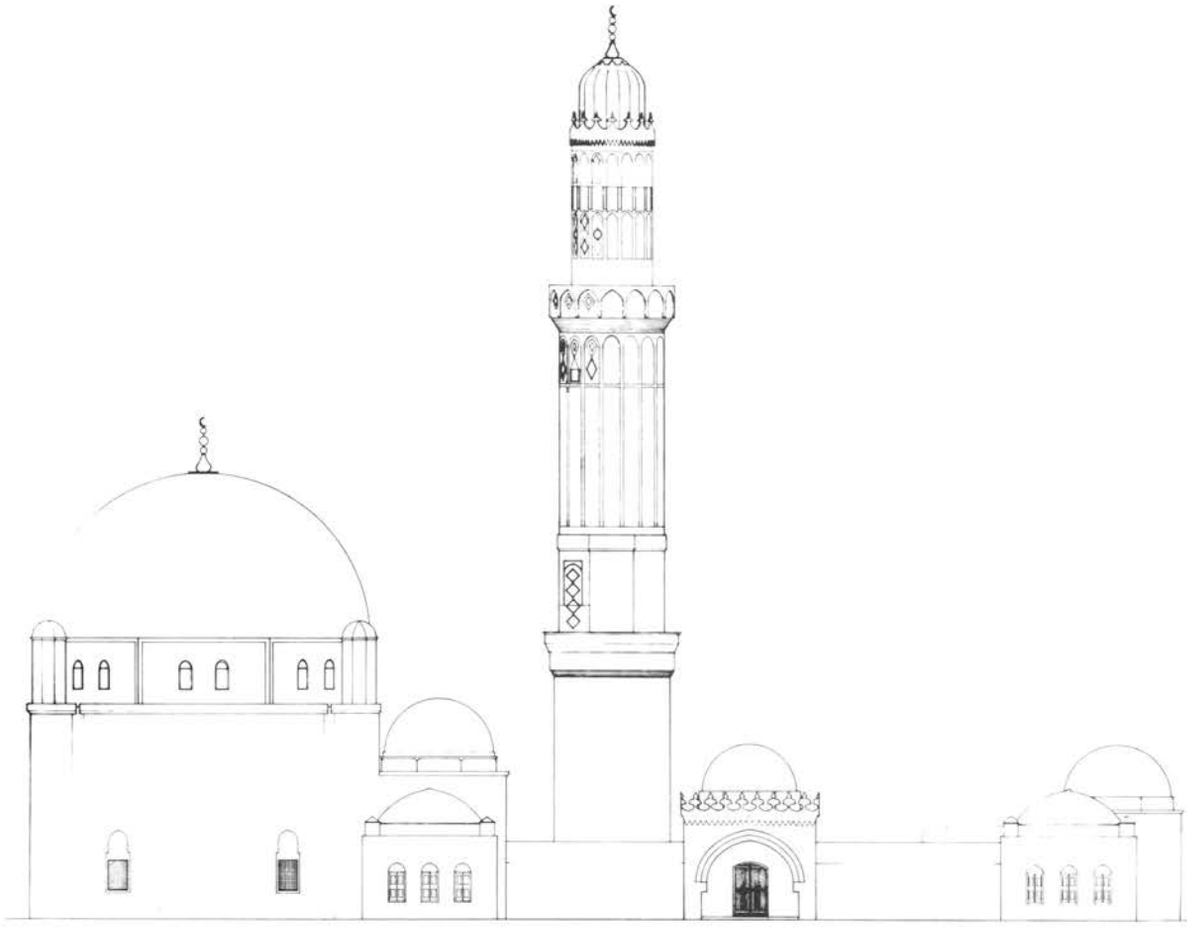


Fig. 19.7 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. Plan, elevation and section (see also next page).



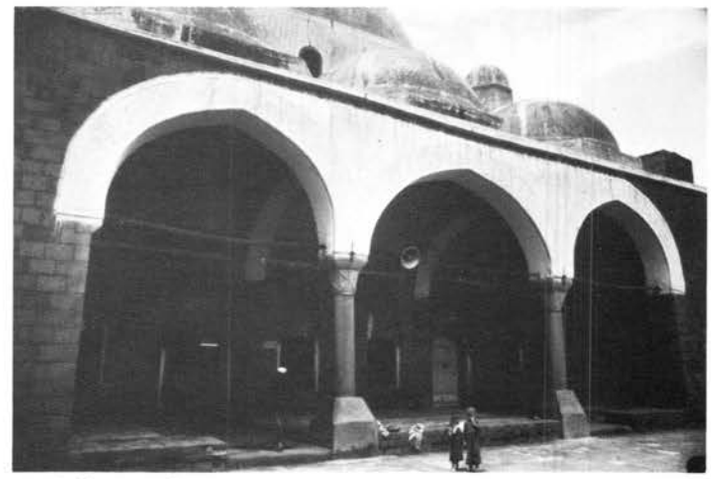
Gebze.[61] The *minbar* is likewise exactly similar to those built in Istanbul at this time.[62]

Although the minaret conforms to the existing Yemeni type in general character and type of decoration, it has a more austere line and a nobler unity than most of the others, and is conceivably the work of the same Turkish architect. There is no cylindrical shaft; instead the minaret rises from its square base first eight-sided, then sixteen-sided to the sixteen-sided balcony. Above it continues sixteen-sided until it meets the dome which vanishes to a point in sixteen flutes. There is some structural evidence that the minaret was built later than the eastern wall of the courtyard.

The history of the fine *Qubbat Ṭalḥah* is confused (fig. 19.8; pls. 2,32, and pls. 19.82-85). According to al-Ḥajarī[63] it was an ancient mosque which remained small for many centuries. It was then enlarged and its minaret was built by the Ottoman governor Muḥammad Pāshā in 1029/1619-20. He furnished the mosque with precious carpets. There is then a gap in the record of its history until 1247/1831-2, when the Imām al-Mahdī 'Abdullāh b. al-Imām al-Mutawakkil Aḥmad renovated or partly rebuilt it, a fact recorded on an inscription added to the interior south wall of the prayer-hall.[64]

The mosque consists of a domed prayer hall of the same type as at al-Bakīriyyah, but without the side annexes. It is fronted on the western side by a two-arched porch with four domes. The arches in this case are semi-circular, and the doors, windows, and internal furnishings differ in design from al-Bakīriyyah type.

Externally the resemblance between the two prayer halls is quite strong, Qubbat Ṭalḥah having a dome of the same shape,



19.75 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. The arcaded porch fronting the prayer hall.

with similar octagonal turrets at the corners. As in al-Bakīriyyah the minaret is in the traditional Yemeni style. In this case, however, it does not appear to have been the work of the same architect as the *qubbah,* nor to have been integrated into its design. For although the minaret touches the prayer hall eastern wall, the latter is slightly higher, and the stonework is quite different, that of the minaret being horizontally striped, by building alternate courses of light and dark stone, while the wall of the prayer hall is plain. The proportions of the minaret are also strange, the base being unusually high and the polygonal stage and the main cylindrical shaft above very squat.

61 Cf. Aslanapa, O, op. cit., p. 218.

62 Al-Ḥajarī, however, claims that the *minbar* was a part of the redecoration ordered by Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd during the second Ottoman occupation, in 1298/1880-1. Al-Ḥajarī further mentions that Turkish (Rūmī) carpets were added at this time. (*Masājid*, 17; *A'immat al-Yaman*, (2), I, 14.)

63 *Masājid,* 68.

64 Al-Ḥajarī deciphered it as it 'made a useful addition to it and made it a dome,' but this is not consistent with the evidence given below, in particular that of the style of the windows.

19.76 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. The ablution block.

Accepting that the minaret was not built at the same time as the prayer hall, it seems likely that the minaret was built first, as al-Ḥajarī suggests, and that later the height of the lower parts was raised by casing the original structure, to bring the square base to the height of the prayer hall. The date of the erection of the domed main building is unknown, but it has a number of architectural features which suggest an 11th/17th century attribution (see below).

Nothing remains of the earliest mosque, nor of the enlargement made to it when the minaret was built in 1029/1619-20, although the open-air ablutions, the covered ablutions, the well-ramp (*mirna'*) and the poor lodgings above it may date from before this period.

Externally the prayer hall has fine decorative plasterwork on the dome and octagonal turrets, the dome appears to have been pierced originally with four rows of small openings to let in top light, which would have created a most beautiful and unusual effect. A high brass finial with a crescent surmounts the dome; another, carrying a ring, crowns the minaret.

Four pairs of doors with two different decorative patterns give access to the interior. All seem to have been meant to have protecting porches, but that on the south no longer exists, if it was ever built. The doors are internally exceptionally well decorated, and set in deep recesses so that, when open, the exterior decorations of the door faces line the reveals. A single step leads up onto the praying floor of the mosque. Internally, equally splendid panelled window shutters and cupboard doors are set in wide decorative frames.

The design of the *minbar* is unusual in being recessed into the wall thickness. A flight of steps rises internally from the eastern-most doors to the high doors to the right of the *miḥrāb* (pl. 19.85).

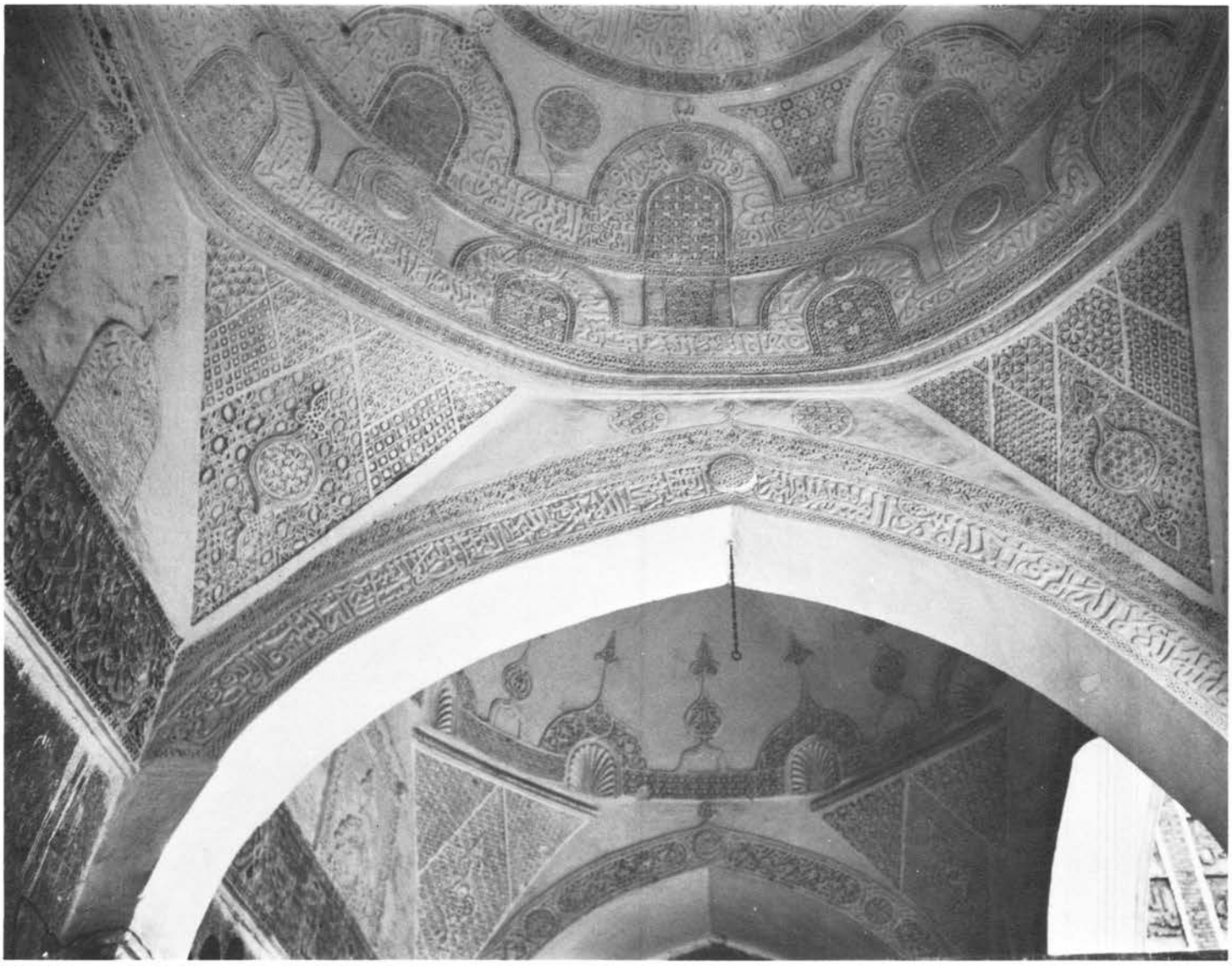
The *miḥrāb* has a particularly fine design (pl. 19.86) resembling in its upper part that of the mosque of al-Madrasah.

The high windows in the drum of the dome are quite unusual in Ṣan'ā' in the strictly geometric design of their tracery, based on pure circles, and also in the careful harmony of colours, ranging from honey-coloured to dark orange (pl. 19.85). They are reminiscent of Ottoman work in Istanbul and Cairo.[65]

Later Mosques

After the Ottoman conquest there was a return to a taste for simpler mosques, with transverse arcades, usually with scalloped ornaments, carrying flat roofs supported on beams. Tombs, however, were roofed with domes, and these frequently bore evidence of influence from the surviving Ottoman buildings. In

65 E.g. in Istanbul, Üsküdar, Yeni Valide Mosque, lower windows 1012/1603, and Cairo, Mosque of Sinān Pasha 989/1581 and Mosque of Malike Safiye 1019/1619.



19.77 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. Interior of a dome in the porch of the prayer hall.

several cases the entire mosque was conceived in forms derived from al-Bakīriyyah.

The *mosque and qubbah of al-Mutawakkil* were built in two stages. The original building, to the east, was built by the Imām al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allāh al-Qāsim in 1139/1726-7,[66] and served both as his tomb chamber containing his tomb, and as the mosque (pl. 35; 19.87-90). The upper walls of the interior, the pendentives and the *miḥrāb* are richly decorated in calligraphy and patterning of generally good quality, although already there are some hints of decline. The doors, shutters and cupboard are relatively unembellished. The tomb is surrounded by a splendidly carved wooden screen which shields it from the rest of the prayer space.

This original building has its own forecourt, with an arcade on one side, through which one passes to the forecourt of the second building, a grander prayer hall built in the 14th/20th century. This has a large central dome standing on four piers linked by wide arches, surrounded by eight slightly smaller domes, making a most impressive ensemble externally. It has a *minbar* of the Ṭalḥah mosque type, and a vigorous treatment of the *miḥrāb* below the quality of that in the neighbouring tomb.

There was an architect for the Mosque of al-Mutawakkil in Ṣan'ā' when it was built in ca. 1936. He was the *muhandis* al-Ḥaymī. But he made the plans directly on the earth and there were no drawings or models.

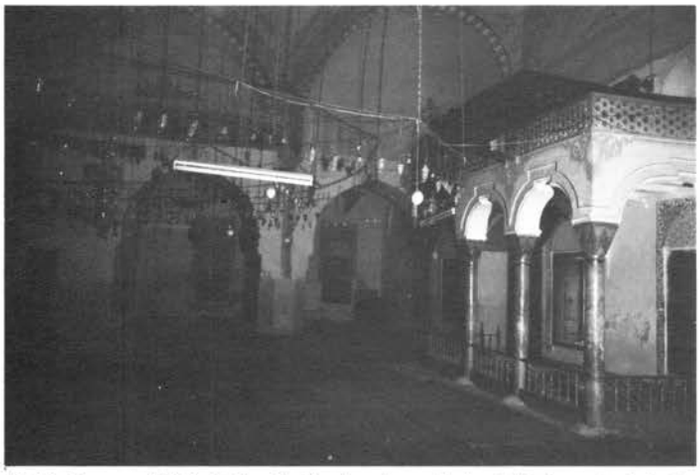
The *Qubbat al-Mahdī 'Abbās* was built by the Imām al-Mahdī li-Dīn Allāh al-'Abbās in 1164/1750-51.[67] It is in external form close to the main volume of al-Bakīriyyah, though with an asymmetrical court and without a porch or portico. There is a fine minaret derived from al-Bakīriyyah but lacking its tautness in design (pl. 8).

Internally, the plaster surfaces are relatively plain; there is no great octagon supporting the dome, which instead rises straight from plain pendentures, as it does in Qubbat Ṭalḥah, but the woodwork of doors, windows and shutters is splendidly decorated (pls. 33, 34). The *minbar* is built within the wall as it is in Qubbat Ṭalḥah.

The separate domed tomb of the Imām was apparently built before his death in 1189/1775-6. The interior is relatively plain, presumably to set off the magnificent tomb (pls. 36, 37). The wide range of decoration on this tomb is paralleled by door, shutter and cupboard designs in the palaces and houses of Ṣan'ā' from this time, but its perfect state of preservation allows a much clearer idea of the quality of craftsmanship and finish. Opposite

66 *Masājid,* 91-2.
67 Testified by a chronogram quoted by al-Ḥajarī, op. cit., 70.

19.78 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. The interior of the prayer hall.



19.79 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. The interior, with the *dakkah*, or raised *dīwān*, against the rear wall.

the Imām's tomb is that of one of his wives, a traditional tomb which is strangely moving in the simplicity of its worn boulders (pl. 19.95).

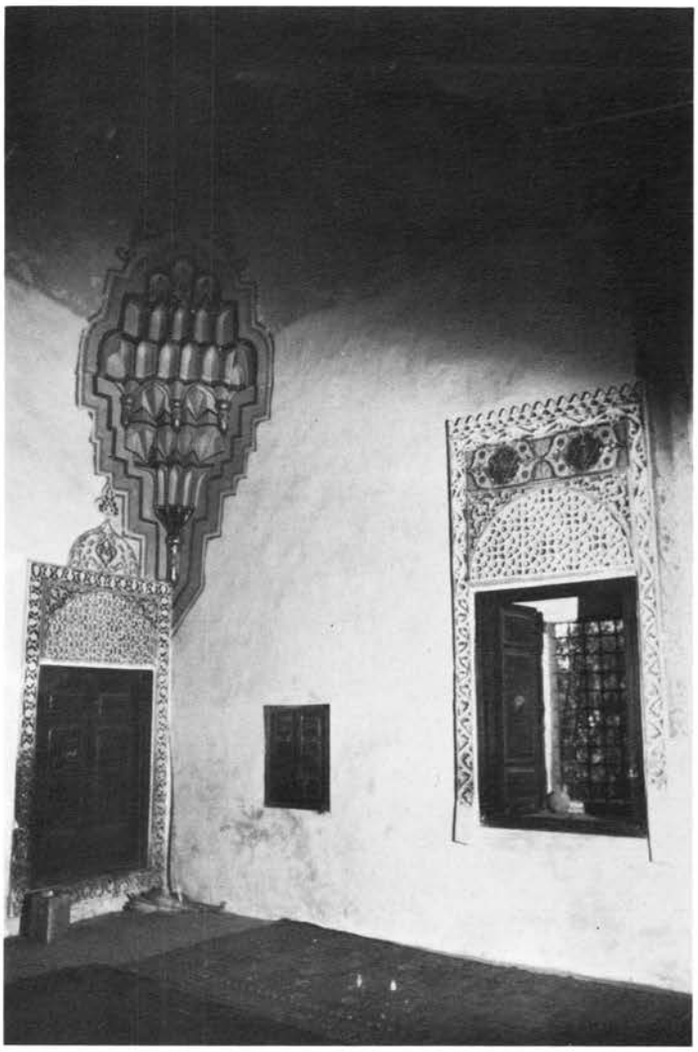
The extension of *al-Abhar mosque* by the Imām al-Manṣūr al-Ḥusayn in 1171/1757-8 conformed to the original medieval design. His domed tomb chamber is richly decorated, but already there are signs of decadence in the undisciplined extravagance

19.80 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. The interior, looking out through a doorway into the courtyard.

and even crudity of the designs. The tomb itself, although less well-preserved, is apparently the precursor of that of al-Mahdī al-'Abbās (pl. 19.94).

In later mosques decoration tends to rely more on bright colour than on refinement of pattern. Bas-relief decoration disappears entirely from such late mosques as that of the Bāb al-Qā', in which the garrison used to pray, the *miḥrāb* being simply ornamented with a painted calligraphic surround in royal blue, silver and gold. Ornament of a folk-art type, incorporating flowers and birds in strong expressive conventionalized drawing, begins to make its appearance in late mosques, along with bright colouring; this appears to be an aftermath of the second occupation by the Turks, and an indication of the breakdown of traditional culture and tastes (e.g. the repainting of the Mosque of Ibn al-Ḥusayn in 1355/1936-7, pl. 38), although this bold folk decoration has its own appeal.

The continuing interest in the embellishment of mosques in Ṣan'ā' is evidenced both by the way in which fine new minarets have been added within living memory (Ibn al-Ḥusayn, 1355/1936-7), and by the way in which old minarets have been doubled in height and much richer ornament added (the minaret of al-Zumur, originally built 1205/1790-1, heightened ca. 1365/1945 pl. 19.96). Some old minarets which retained unpainted brick patterns have recently had the pattern picked out and emphasized in whitewash. The Mosque of Mūsā, an 8th/14th century mosque to which a splendid high minaret was added by the Imām al-Manṣūr al-Ḥusayn in 1160/1747-8, was redecorated and the minaret repainted in 1393/1973. The great change this brought



19.81 Mosque of al-Bakīriyyah. A window.

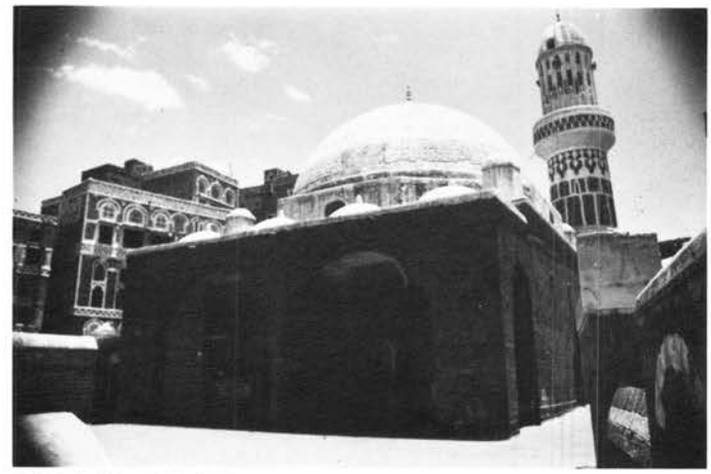
to one of the major monuments of the city may be judged by comparing the visual effect of the minaret before (pl. 54) and after repainting (pl. 19).

Besides a number of new mosques, generally small and undistinguished, which were built in the newer quarters of Ṣan'ā' in the 13th/19th and 14th/20th centuries, there are two recently erected reinforced concrete mosques designed by foreigners. These introduce a jarring note, but their minarets are fortunately well hidden from the skyline of the old city.

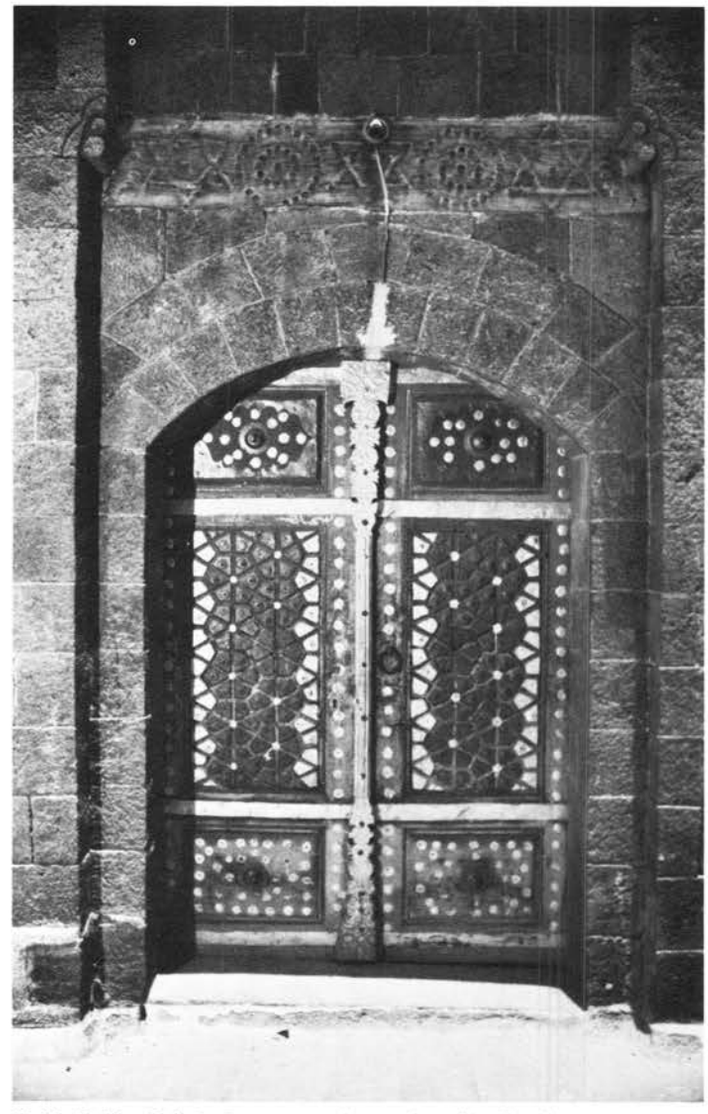
List of Ṣan'ā' Mosques

The numbers in brackets refer to al-Ḥajarī, *Masājid Ṣan'ā'*

al-Abzar (3)
Ibn al-Ḥusayn (4)
al-Abhar (5)
al-Abyaḍayn (6)
Ibn al-Rajā' (7)
Abu 'l-Rūm (7)
Abu 'l-Sahl (8)
Abū Shamlah (9)
al-Akhḍar (9)
Izdamur/Zumur (14)
Qubbat Iskandar (14)
Bāb al-Qā' (16)
al-Badawī (16)
Baghalān (16), ruined

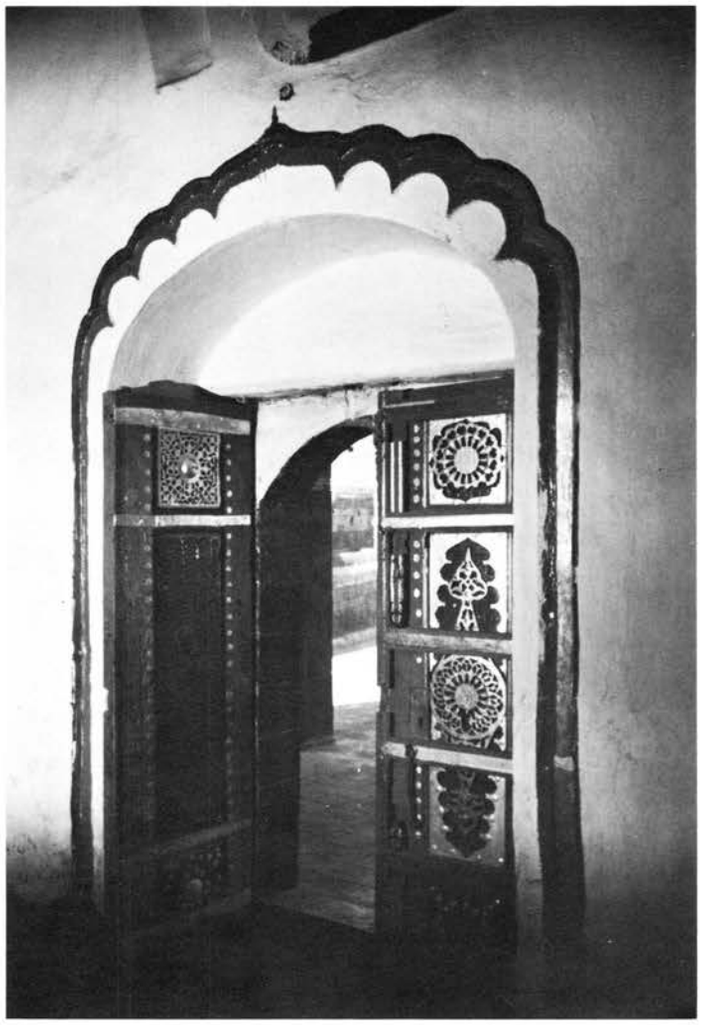


19.82 Qubbat Ṭalḥah. The prayer hall.

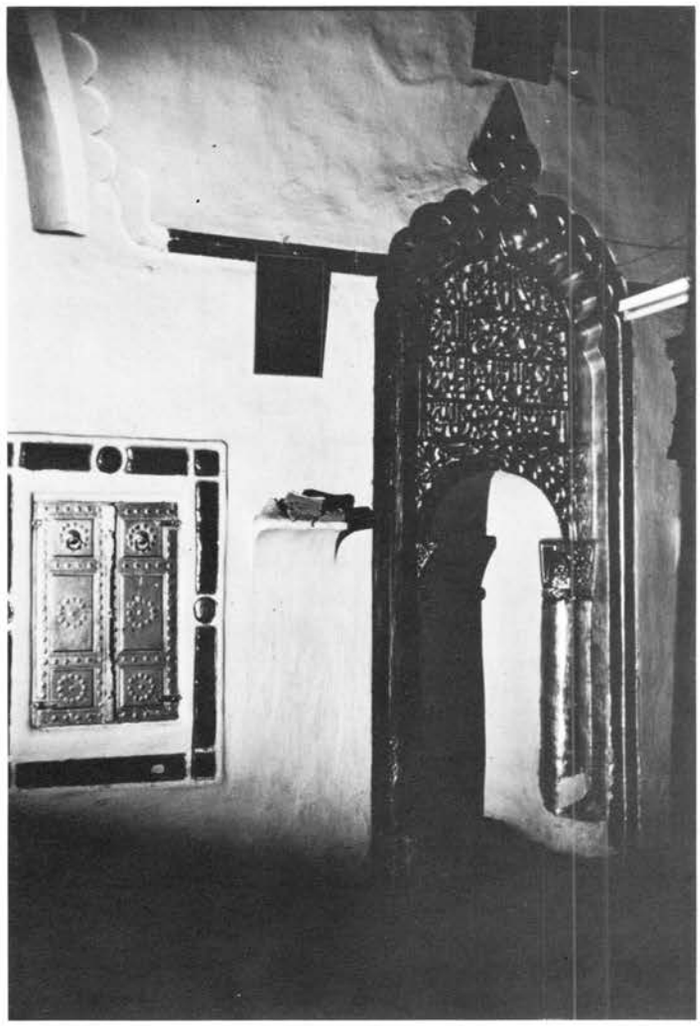


19.83 Qubbat Talḥah. Doorway on the southern side. Exterior.

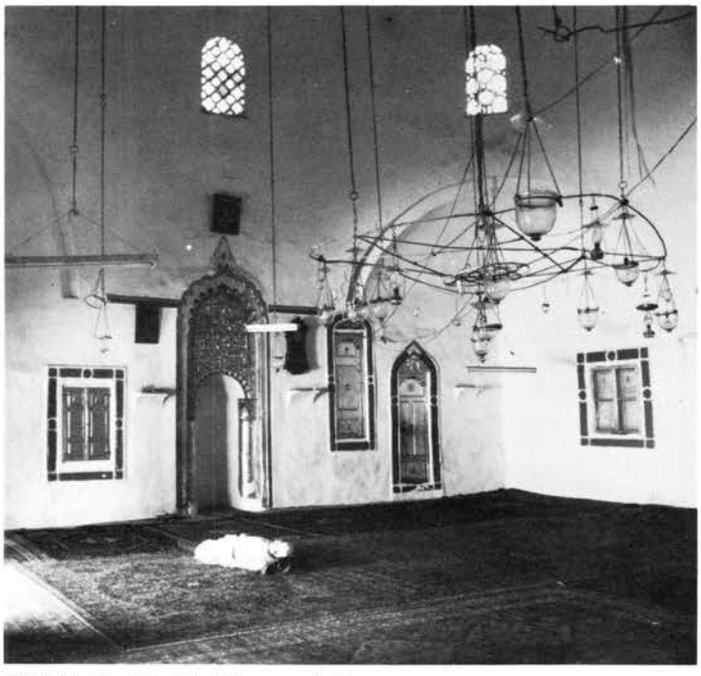
Qubbat al-Bakīriyyah (17)
al-Bilaylī (21)
al-Bahmah (22)
al-Taqwā (22)
Tawfīq (23)
al-Jāriyah (23)
Jāmi' Ṣan'ā' al-Kabīr al-Muqaddas (23)
Jabbānat Ṣan'ā' (39)



19.84 Qubbat Ṭalḥah. Doorway. Interior.



19.86 Qubbat Ṭalḥah. The *qiblah* wall, with the *miḥrāb*.

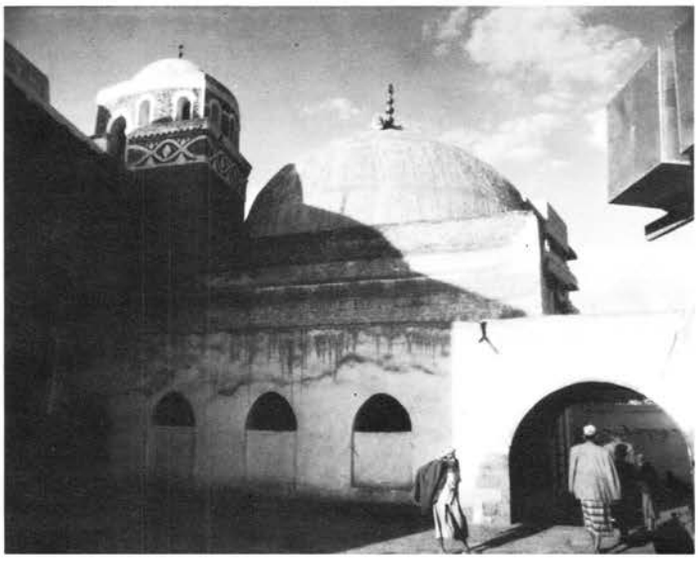


19.85 Qubbat Ṭalḥah. The prayer hall.

19.87 Mosque of al-Mutawakkil. Exterior.

al-Jadīd (41)
al-Jalā (42)
Jamāl al-Dīn (42)
Janāḥ (42)

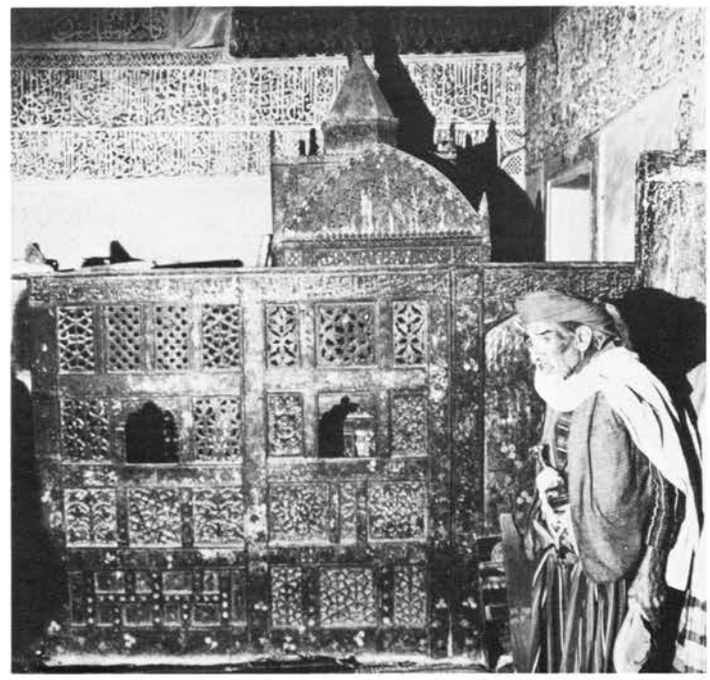
Ḥajar (43)
al-Ḥurqān (48)
al-Ḥumaydī (48)
Ḥanẓal (49)
al-Ḥaymī (50)
al-Khāwī (50), ruined
al-Kharrāz (51)
Dāwūd (51)
al-Dahīnah/Duhaynah (52), ruined
al-Raḥabī (52)



19.88 Mosque of al-Mutawakkil. Courtyard.

19.89 Mosque of al-Mutawakkil. *Miḥrāb*.

al-Ruḍwān (52)
al-Rummānah (53), ruined
al-Zubayr (53), ruined
al-Sa'dī (53)
al-Shāhid (58)
al-Sharīfah (58)
al-Shahidayn (59)
al-Ṣuffah (60), ruined
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (61)
al-Ṣayyād (62)

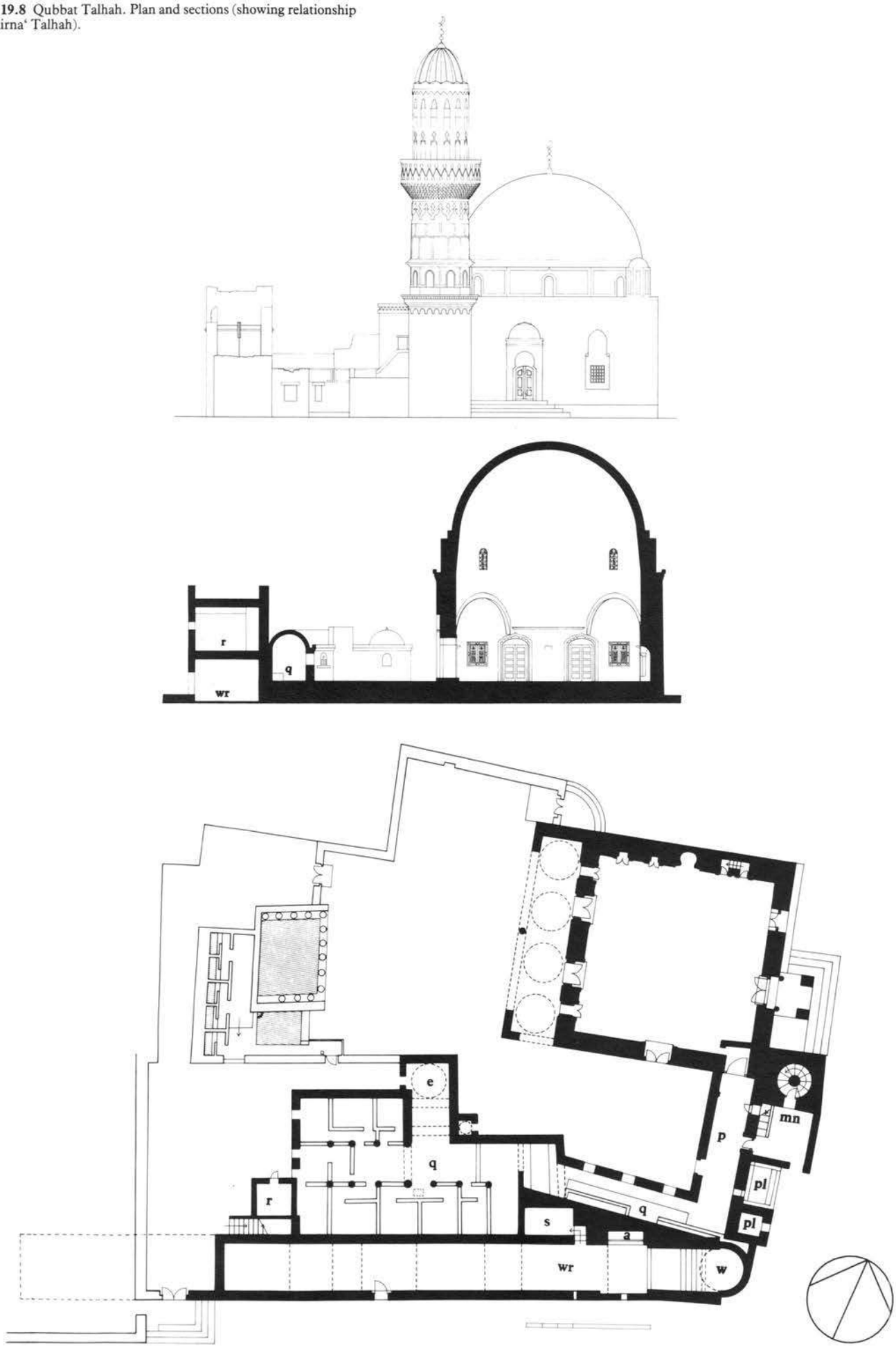


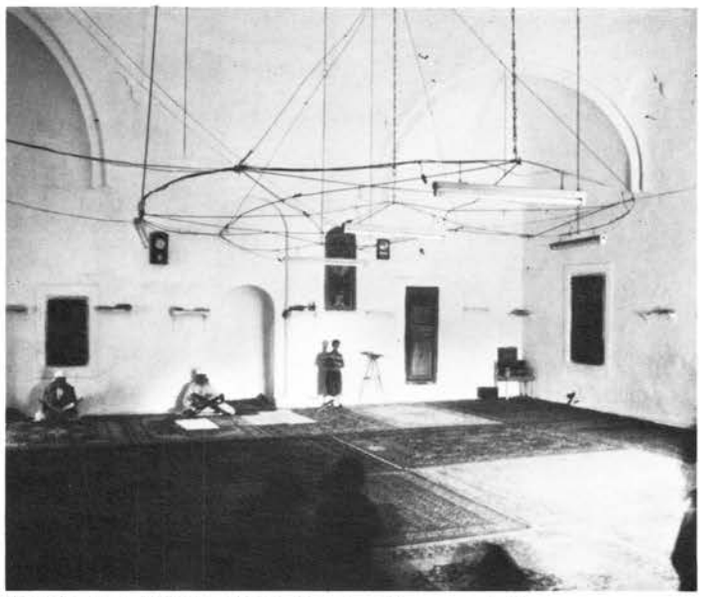
19.90 Mosque of al-Mutawakkil. Entrance and tomb.

19.91 Qubbat al-Mahdī 'Abbās. Exterior.

19.92 Qubbat al-Mahdī 'Abbās. Ablution building, interior view.

Fig. 19.8 Qubbat Talhah. Plan and sections (showing relationship to Mirna' Talhah).

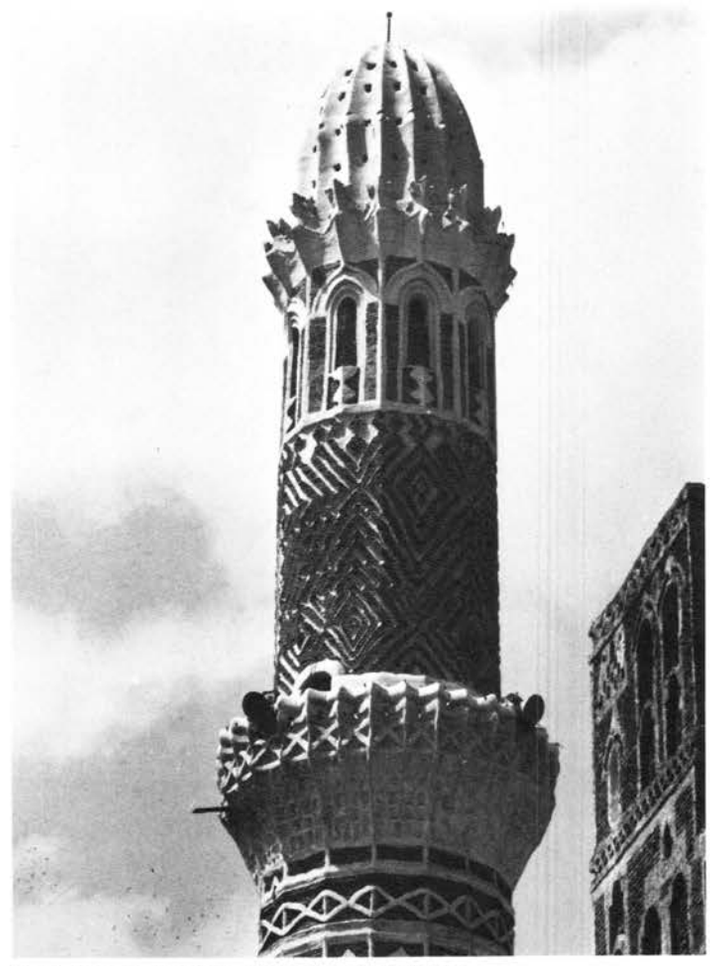




19.93 Qubbat al-Mahdī 'Abbās. Interior of the prayer hall.

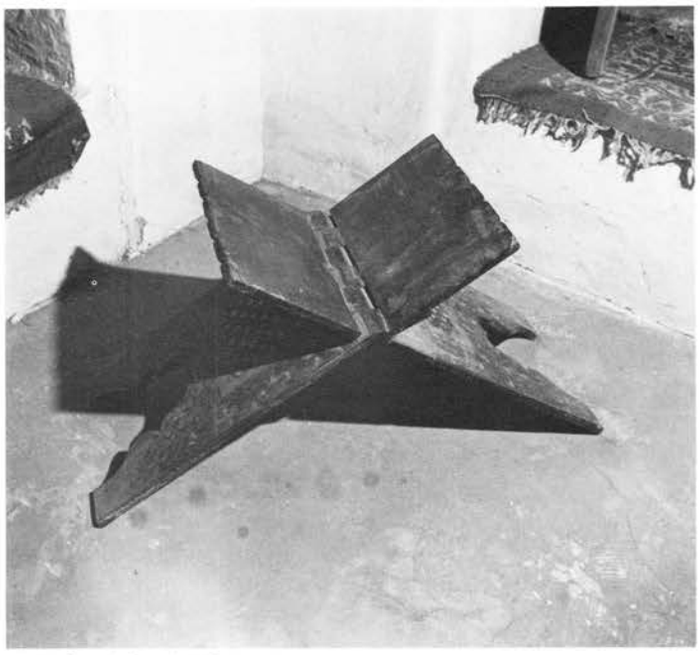
19.95 Qubbat al-Mahdī 'Abbās. The small tomb alongside that of al-Mahdī 'Abbās.

19.94 Mosque of al-Abhar. Tomb in the *qubbah* adjoining the prayer hall.



19.96 Mosque of al-Zumur. Upper part of minaret.

al-Ḍabbī (66)
al-Ṭāq (66)
al-Ṭāwūs (66)
Ṭalḥah (68)
al-Ṭawāshī (69)
Qubbat al-Imām al-Mahdī 'Abbās (70)
'Addil (70)
al-'Urḍī (82)
al-'Urḍī al-Jadīd al-Difā'ī (83)
'Aqīl (83)
'Ukāshah (84), ruined
al-'Alamī (84)
'Alī (86)
'Iyāḍ (86)
Ghuzl al-Bāsh (87)
al-Fāl (87)
Fāyi' (87)
Farwah b.Musayk (89)



19.97 Stand (*kursiyy*) for holding the Qur'ān.

al-Filayḥī (90)
Qārish (91)
Qubbat al-Mutawakkil Qāsim b. al-Ḥusayn (91)
al-Qāsimī (92)
al-Qāḍī (93)
al-Qaṣr (93)
al-Quḍāt (93)
Quṭayb (94), (voc. uncertain), ruined.
al-Qilāb (94), (Qallāb?, uncertain), ruined.
al-Kubbānī (94)
al-Ka'bī (95), (voc. uncertain), ruined
al-Maḥāmid (95)
Maḥmūd (95)
al-Madrasah (96)
al-Madhhab (99)
al-Murādiyyah (113)
al-Mustashfā (114)
Ma'ād (114)
Mu'āwiyah (114), ruined
Mu'īḍ (114), ruined
al-Maftūn (115)
al-Muqaddam (115), ruined
al-Malbadī (115), (?voc.), ruined
al-Muntaqim (115), ruined

Locations of 8 forgotten mosques given in al-Ḥajarī, pp. 115-6.

Mūsā (121)
al-Nizaylī/Nuzaylī (122)
Nuṣayr (122)
Nuqum (123)
al-Nahrayn (125)
Nūḥ (125)
al-Nūr (126)
al-Hādī Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil (126)
al-Hādī Yaḥyā (126)
al-Washalī/Wushalī (127)
al-W ḍ ḥī (129)
Wahb (b. Munabbih) (129)
Qubbat al-Imām Yaḥyā (130)
al-Ruqaymī (136)

The following *Masājid Mansiyyah* (forgotten) are mentioned (136 seq.).

Mirjān near Masjid Mūsā. Masjid al-Nisā' (*Miswaddah*) in the direction of the Maydān. al-Naqawī (*Miswaddah*) in Ṭubūl-Khānah mid 4th century H. (Rāzī).al-Najjār (*Miswaddah Sinān*). al-Nujaym (*Miswaddah*). Hind Bint Quṭrān (ditto). Ya'īsh (ditto). Al-Ghiyāth (*Miswaddah*) in the direction of Ḥabs al-Dimm an 8th century mosque. Qubbat al-Fā'iq (*Miswaddah*). Masjid Ruzayq. Masjid Sinān.

Rāzī mentions (*Masājid*, id, 139), M. Ma'n b. Zā'idah, repaired in 407/1016-17, 'Alī b. Abī Bakr where biers are prayed over, Bīr al-'Azab, Ibn Yazīd unknown place, al-Ṣayāqil, M. Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barmakī, in a place known in Rāzī's day as Sūq al-Lasāsīn, M. Ibn Miqdām Ismā'īl b. Sh rūs, M. al-Amīr al-Baghdādī.

Miswaddah Sinān mentions now forgotten mosques: M. Ḥimyar in Ḥārat al-Filayḥī lying between al-Filayḥī and Dāwūd mosques, Qubbat Bilāl at Bāb al-Yaman, al-Tubshi'ah in Ḥārat al-Washalī, al-Jīlānī, al-Ribāṭ west of M. Mūsā, Ribāṭ al-Qindī west of the Maydān, al-Raṣāṣ in Ḥārat al-Ḥumaydī and another Raṣāṣ (same name) elsewhere. M. Sāsān seemingly near the Zabārah Quarter, al-Sākit in Ḥāfat Ḥammām Saba', al-Ṣūfī, Hārat al-Kharrāz, al-Ṭāb, Qubbat 'Ābidīn in the Sūq north of al-Jāmi', the 'Ābidīn well still west of Sūq al-Ḥalaqah, M. al-'Amūdī (a well known Ḥaḍramī family of *faqīhs*), al-Qufaylī in Ḥārat al-Nahrayn south of the Waqf Court (*ḥawiyy*), al-Qayyim, Muḥyi 'l-Dīn, al-Naqīs/Nuqays in Ḥārat Masjid al-Kharrāz in Darb al-Jawfī, al-Nūrayn in Ḥāfat al-Ṭawāshī.

These names are in themselves of some interest and further investigation of their history and possible location might bring some results.

Some Technical Terms Relating to Mosques

Barīkah/barik, ablution pool open to the sky.
Bawwābah, = *madkhal al-masjid,* entrance.
Taqdimah, portico in front of a building.
Ḥāyiṭ, garden (of mosque).
Ḥawiyy(ah) (pl., *ḥawāyā*), court.
Dāyir = *dawwār.*
Dawwār, balcony of minaret, *a'lā wa-asfal*, upper and lower.
Zuwwah = *qurnah,* internal corner of room.
Ṣawḥ(ah) (pl., *aṣwāḥ*), court of mosque = *ṣarḥ* or *shamsiyyah.*
Ṣawma'ah (pl., *ṣawāmi'*), minaret.
Mu'akhkhar, southern hall of mosque.[68]
Muttakhidhah = *miṭhār,* ablution-place.
Majnab = *janāḥ,* wing.
Mishrāq = *madkhal al-bāb al-sharqī,* eastern entrance. This word, from *Masājid,* 69, does not seem in general use today.
Masfā (pl., *maṣāfī*), foot-pool. See p. 318, n. 93.
Maqṣūrah, an enclosure made within a mosque in some appropriate place where one can pray at night or in winter and which can be lit without having to light up the whole mosque.
Miṭhār (*maṭāhir/maṭāhīr*), ablution place.
Muqaddam, northern hall of a mosque.
Mamshā (pl., *mamāshī*), ablution place, = *miṭhār/muttakhidhah.*
Mīḍār (pl., *mayāḍīr*), ablution place.

68 K. A. C. Creswell, 'Origin of the concave *miḥrāb*', *Proc. of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists,* New Delhi, Jan. 4-10, 1964, Poona, 1970, 237-8, quotes an early Islamic source for the terms *muqaddam, mu'akhkhar,* and *jawānib,* side wings of the mosque.